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Woman's Weekly

20 June 2023

FUN BUNTING to knit

FOR A SPLASH OF COLOUR

THE CLEVER WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

The secret is in your tummy!

Michaela Strachan

I'm now really proud of my scars because they tell my story

New mystery serial STARTS TODAY

SWIMWEAR SOLUTIONS to flatter your shape

BEST NEW BARBECUE RECIPES

LIGHT & LOVELY!

AFFORDABLE STYLE

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Hello!

In search of perfection

“Around about the year 2000, after I’d started the Woman’s Weekly Gardening magazine (now part of the Living Series), we did a survey of readers who gardened. It turned out they’d had their current plot for 15 years on average, but the most popular description of its state was ‘still in development’. This caused some merriment in the office among non-gardeners, but of course the more green-fingered understood immediately – our plots are never quite perfect… yet! If you feel the same, see page 42 for great ideas. And don’t miss the latest Living Series issue, Woman’s Weekly Royals, in the shops now.”

Geoff
EDITOR
geoffrey.palmer@futurenet.com

COVER PHOTO: DAN KENNEDY. STYLING: NATALIE READ. HAIR AND MAKE UP: MARCOS GURGEL AND SHERRIE WARWICK. *UK ONLY. T&Cs APPLY

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Good to SHARE

Mini meadows, fantastic food and beavers in the big city!

Capital comeback for furry engineers

Paradise Fields in Ealing will welcome two busy beavers this autumn, in an important step towards rewilding our urban communities. The breeding pair will make their home in west London, after receiving funding from the capital's mayor, Sadiq Khan. Beavers are ecosystem engineers, known for boosting native wildlife and reducing flood risks by creating wetland habitats. These beloved rodents were hunted to extinction 400 years ago in Britain, but are now legally protected. It's thought there could be hundreds roaming wild in England's waterways.

*** Find out more at ealingwildlifegroup.com**

Did you know?

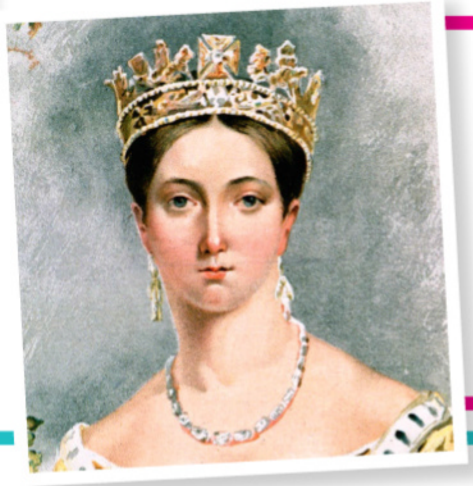
Some staple cleaning products create harmful gases when mixed together. Toxic combinations include bleach and vinegar, bleach and ammonia, as well as bleach and toilet bowl cleaner. Baking soda and vinegar can produce a foam that explodes!

BLACK CIRCUS FOOD

SUMMER OF YUM

Foodies Festival is a celebration of all things delicious! A series of events across the UK features live music, cookery workshops for kids, artisan markets, street food and a chef's theatre. It's at Chelmsford from 23-25 June.

*** Find full dates and tickets, from £18, at foodiesfestival.com**



On this day in history

Early in the morning on 20 June 1837, young princess Victoria awoke at Kensington Palace to news of the death of her uncle, King William IV. This meant she became Queen of England at just 18 years old. One of her first acts as the new ruling monarch was to have her bed removed from the room she shared with her mother!

WORDS: ANNABEL KEMP, LOUISE MIDGLEY. PHOTOS: ALAMY, BLACK CIRCUS FOOD, GETTY, JOHAN PERSSON, RHS/JOANNA KOSSAK

GO FOR GERSHWIN

Don't miss *Crazy for You*, the dazzling musical bursting with glorious Gershwin show tunes and irresistible choreography. It tells the tale of Bobby, who must foreclose a theatre's mortgage, but ends up putting on a show after falling madly in love with the theatre owner's daughter. The run kicks off on 24 June at London's Gillian Lynne Theatre.

*** Buy tickets, from £25, at crazyforyoumusical.com**

GARDEN BARGAIN

If you receive Universal or Pension Credit, you can enjoy fabulous flowers and horticultural displays with your loved ones this summer at any RHS Garden for just £1. As part of a brand new Access for All scheme, there are also £2 shuttle buses to RHS Garden Wisley and RHS Bridgewater from nearby train stations.

*** Visit rhs.org.uk for more information.**

BIG NAMES

Is your name unusual or bang on trend? In England and Wales, the current favourite for newborn boys is Noah, while the most chosen name for baby girls is Olivia.

Money-saving tip

Buying frozen fruit instead of fresh usually works out cheaper. They are still packed with nutrients and, in fact, bags of fruit from the freezer section often contain more vitamins A and C. Pop them in a blender when making a smoothie for a refreshing summer drink.

NATURE NOTES

From Louise Midgley

Given that around 95% of the UK's wild flower meadows have been lost since the 1930s, it's encouraging to see so many of my neighbours converting their grass verges into mini wild flower meadows. Hand-painted, forget-me-not blue wooden hearts with inscriptions such as Bee Kind, Bee Alert and Bee Friendly designate the 'no mow areas' throughout spring and summer. These floral pockets join together to form wild flower corridors for a wide diversity of insects. It would be wonderful to think the whole country could get behind the Blue Campaign, founded in 2014, and collectively help to reverse the staggering loss of our native flora.

My garden week

I've crumbled some lavender flowers into a jar of sugar. I'll use the lavender sugar in a week or so for some homemade biscuits.

Good to SHARE

We love to hear what you've been up to, so do get in touch!

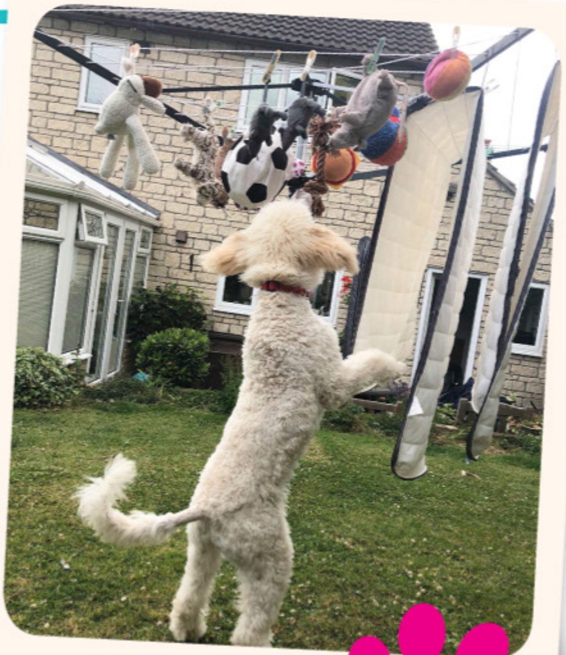
Letter of the week

so cosy.
it with black boots, a hat, gloves and a handbag that I bought from a great little independent boutique in my village. Even though I'm now 94 years young, I still have such a passion for fashion and am always looking for new pieces to add to my ever-expanding wardrobe!
What's your favourite thing about yourself?
It has to be my smile.

Hats off to Connie

Your 7 March issue featured a Connie Bate, aged 94. Could I just congratulate this woman – I couldn't believe her age and she looked absolutely stunning in her outfit! I'm 20 years younger than her and I've never managed to look that elegant in whatever I'm wearing. It really made my day to see her lovely smiling face greeting me when I opened my magazine!
Krys Bather, Blackwood, Gwent

Editor Geoff says: We originally featured Connie last year, but when we came across her again, we couldn't resist featuring her for a second time! She's an inspiration to us all.



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Here's our poodle, Willow. As you can see she is trying to get her toys from the washing line!
Pam Masters, Bath

✱ Got a pet pic that makes you smile? We can give it a good home

GET IN TOUCH

WE LOVE LETTERS
***Woman's Weekly*, Future plc, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR.**
P.S. It really helps when you put your details in capitals.
✱ We do not return photos (apart from You Wore It Well) so please do not send originals.

EMAIL US
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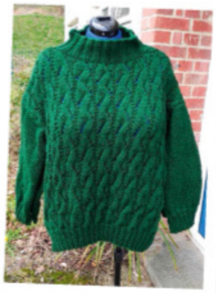
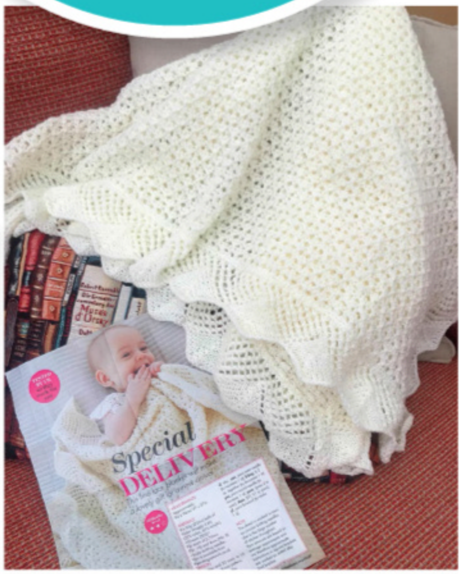
Tell us your full name, address and daytime phone number, please.

FAMILY KNITTING TRADITIONS



My 91-year-old mum has been knitting since she was 11 years old. Over the decades she has knitted countless items including complex Aran jumpers, the patterns for which she had memorised. Unfortunately, in recent years, she has started to lose her sight and is no longer able to knit. Last month she came to stay with us, and your jumper pattern In the Pink [21 February issue] had really caught my eye, so I decided to surprise Mum by knitting one for her. I chose Paintbox Simply Chunky yarn in Racing Green. I enjoyed making it so much that I've decided to knit another one for myself!
Helen Glos, via email



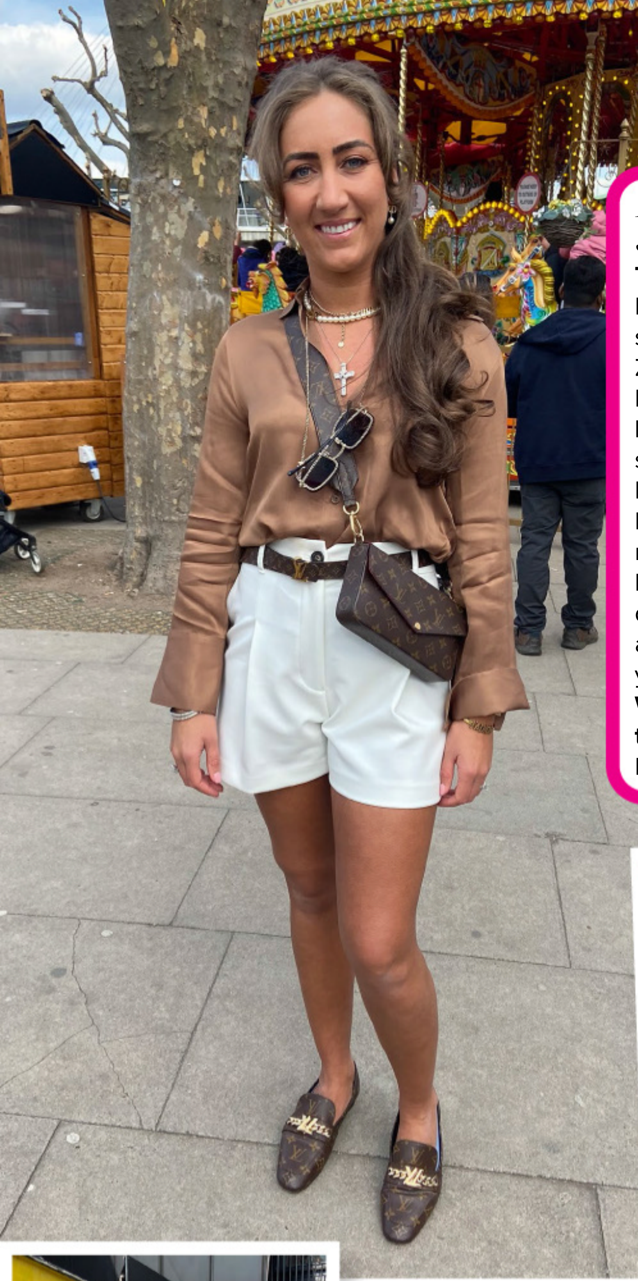
LOOK WHAT I MADE

I love *Woman's Weekly*, and really enjoyed making this baby's shawl from your 30 June 2020 issue. I hope you like it.
Sally, Hampshire

Important! All contributions to *Woman's Weekly* must be original and NOT duplicated to other publications. £25 will be paid to the writer of the 'Letter of the week' for all rights in each letter printed. The Editor reserves the right to modify any letter. Future plc reserves the right to reuse any submission to *Woman's Weekly* in any format or medium, including social networking sites. We regret that we cannot enter into personal correspondence. Photos of children under 18 must be accompanied by written permission of a parent/legal guardian. All details correct at time of going to press.

WHAT YOU'RE WEARING COMPILED BY: ANNE HARTNETT

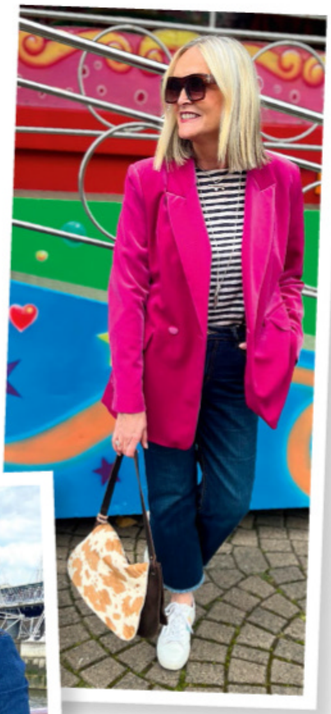
What you're WEARING



Melissa Smith, 30

Tell us about your look
My blouse and tailored shorts are both from Zara, while my bag, belt and shoes are by Louis Vuitton – with sunglasses by Chanel. I love shopping on the high street for chic, modern classic pieces, but I'll always add designer accessories, as I think they elevate your look.

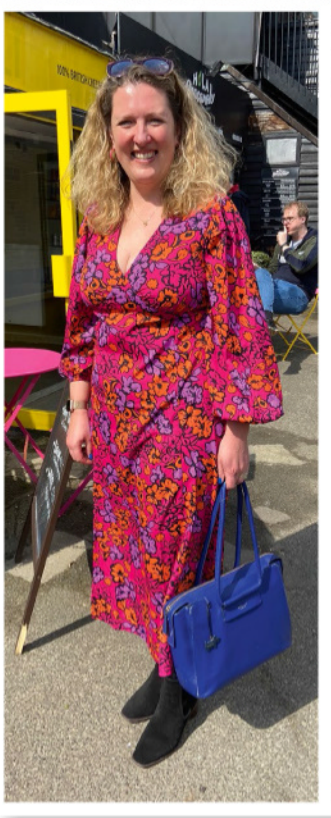
What's your favourite thing about yourself?
My eyes.



Tracy Rossborough Hayes, 55

Tell us about your look
I'd say my style is quite classic with a boho twist! I rarely wear jeans but when I do, I'll team them with something shiny, sparkly or velvet – like this pink velvet jacket from Matalan. My jeans, T-shirt and bag are from TK Maxx, and my trainers are Hotter.

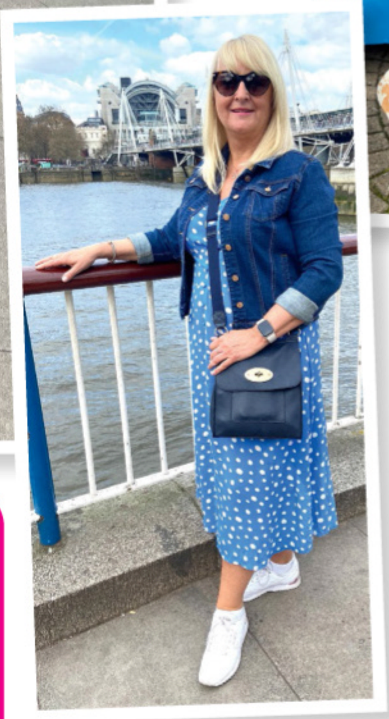
What's your favourite thing about yourself?
The confidence I've gained as I've got older to wear what I like.



Alison Bell, 42

Tell us about your look
I don't usually wear dresses very much as it's often difficult to find styles I like. However, I was meeting friends for lunch at Easter and thought I'd have a look on Asos. Amazingly, I spotted this one for just £22 – a bargain! I love colour and added this big blue bag by Radley for a fun colour clash.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?
I'm very smiley!

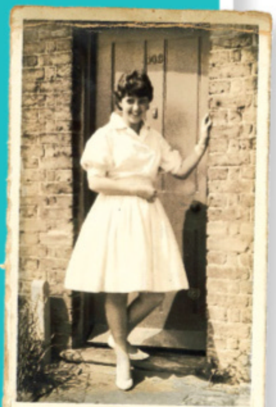


Amanda Holmes, 56

Tell us about your look
I've just got into wearing longer dresses. This one is from Roman. I love the colour and the polka dot print. My denim jacket was a holiday buy from Fuerteventura and my bag came from a boutique in Whitby. I love a white trainer with a dress – these are from JD Sports.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?
My hair.

YOU WORE IT WELL



Wendy Clayton, 1961
I'd just completed my O levels and am wearing a white cotton dress with a fine blue stripe. It was made by my mum Nancy using a Rose & Hubble fabric. She worked for Gillian Hubble – once the fashion editor on *Woman's Weekly* – and each season, Mum was given a selection of fabrics. She often used patterns from *Woman's Weekly*, so we were always 'in fashion'!

✱ We'd love to see how great you looked in any era up to and including the 1980s. Please send a good-quality photo with your name, address and daytime phone number clearly written on the back, to: Fashion Dept, *Woman's Weekly*, Future plc, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR. Photos will be returned.

'I'm proud of my scars'

TV presenter Michaela Strachan on her career, family and life after cancer

Jaci's Lodges

With partner Nick (above) and son Ollie (left)

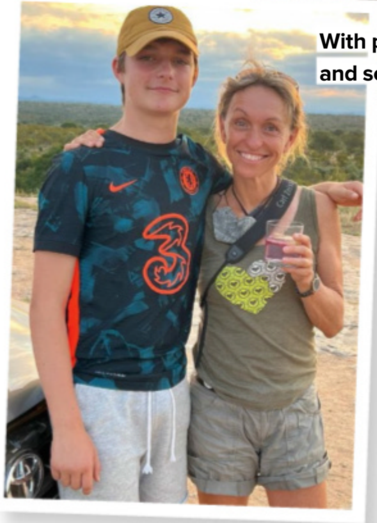
When Michaela Strachan was just starting out on TV, she remembers the excitement she felt at meeting a colleague who'd already been presenting TV for a decade.

'When I met Tommy Boyd on *Wide Awake Club*, he already had 10 years' experience from doing *Magpie* and I remember thinking, "Wow, imagine having this career for 10 years! That would be amazing!"' recalls Michaela, with a laugh. 'And here I am, in my fourth decade and still doing it. I do feel incredibly blessed.'

'It's a story of resilience and survival'

Michaela has been presenting *Springwatch* from RSPB Arne in Dorset on week nights alongside Chris Packham. Now 57, she has been a regular fixture on our TV screens for 35 years, presenting *The Really Wild Show*, *Michaela's Wild Challenge*, *Elephant Diaries*, *Countryfile* and, since 2011, the much-loved 'Watches' – *Springwatch, Autumnwatch* and *Winterwatch*.

The best thing about being in her 50s, says Michaela, 'is that I'm no longer embarrassed about what I don't know. I don't come from an academic background and I've always been a little bit apologetic about that, but I've realised, "So what if I don't know who that actress is in that TV show?"'



She seems very happy in her skin, no doubt due in part to a happy home life. Twenty-odd years ago, Michaela moved to South Africa for love when she met her partner, cameraman Nick Chevallier, a widower with three children, now in their 30s. Michaela and Nick's son, Ollie, was born in 2005.

And despite her hectic work schedule, Michaela likes to look after them. When we speak just before her *Springwatch* stint, she confesses that she made sure the pair would not starve while she was away filming. 'I never thought I'd be the woman that does this, but my partner doesn't cook and my son has no interest in cooking, so I made five weeks' worth of meals for them and put them in the freezer in order, so they're not eating pasta every day,' she says, looking sheepish.

Michaela is embracing her age and soon-to-be-empty nest. She has a unique perspective – nine years ago, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and underwent a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. The legacy of that difficult time is that getting older now holds no fear for Michaela.

'I've got friends who go, "Oh my God, I'm 57!"' she says, mimicking their horror. 'Whereas I think, great! I'm still here! I've got other friends that aren't doing so well. I'm fit, healthy and strong.

'At first, I'd look in the mirror and think my scars and boobs looked weird. Whereas now I'm so proud of those scars because they tell my story. It's a story of resilience and survival, so let's celebrate my weird boobs and my scars!'

From left: *On The Hitman and Her*, *Wide Awake Club* and *The Really Wild Show*

THE
Woman's Weekly
INTERVIEW

To what does she owe her lengthy career? 'I've been very lucky that I've had a lot of long-running series, and that's helped my longevity,' says Michaela. 'I've watched really good presenters just be pushed aside. I don't think there's any rhyme or reason as to why I've continued and other people that have been just as good, if not better than me, haven't.'

Surely, she's being a tad modest. The longevity of Michaela's shows is just as likely to be down to her vibrancy and likeability as a presenter. Even in middle age Michaela seems to possess the energy of a Duracell bunny, with a beaming wide smile and the same enthusiasm for wildlife that made her a perfect replacement for Kate Humble on *Springwatch* in 2012.

Michaela does look after herself by following a vegetarian diet and working out nearly every day, alternating walking the dog, hiking and running, with yoga and Pilates sessions, but even so, how does Michaela keep her energy up on the show's 12-hour days? 'I take a powder supplement called Green Vibrance every day,' explains Michaela. 'Martin [Hughes-Games, a former *Springwatch* presenter] once said to me, "It looks like you got that out of the lawnmower!"

'But I've always been one of those people that has energy. When I was younger I would do 17-hour days, filming *Wide Awake Club* in the day and *The Hitman and Her* in the evenings,' she says, referring to a music show she co-hosted with Pete Waterman. 'But I also believe it's a mind attitude thing. Even if I'm knackered, if I tell myself I'm not tired – and sometimes I do have to dig it up for the Watches – I find it works.'

✱ All episodes of *Springwatch* 2023 are available for viewing on BBC iPlayer.

WORDS: VICKI POWER. PHOTOS: BBC, INSTAGRAM @STRACHAN.MICHAELA, SHUTTERSTOCK

Defending the nation

Get ready to celebrate our amazing Army, Navy and Air Force on Armed Forces Day, 24 June

There are 190,000 servicemen and women protecting UK interests, with around half in the British Army and the rest split between the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Perhaps surprisingly for some, women have been allowed to serve in all combat roles since 2018, though they still account for just 11% of people in uniform. Let's take a march around our marvellous military.

The RAF is the most popular of the armed forces for women

The Royal Air Force

The Royal Air Force (RAF) has been protecting British skies for more than a century. With 37,000 servicemen and women, including more than 3,000 reservists, the RAF has more women than any other area of the armed forces – 15% of regular staff and 23% of reservists. There are more than 50 air force bases in the UK, with the largest in Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. There are also foreign bases in Akrotiri, Gibraltar and Ascension Island.

The Royal Navy

There's more to the Royal Navy than ships. Around 39,000 highly skilled people, including Royal Marines, protect these shores using a sophisticated range of equipment, from deep-sea submarines to helicopters and adaptable amphibious vehicles. There are three naval bases in the UK at Clyde, Devonport and

Having fun on Armed Forces Day in Aldershot and Dudley

The WRNS was formed in 1917

Portsmouth. Devonport is the largest, on a 650-acre site with 15 dry docks and four miles of waterfront. Women have been vital to the Navy since the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRNS) was formed in 1917, and have served on ships as full crew members since 1993.

NCE INDUSTR
D SUDAN
The Army has more than 200 roles to offer

The British Army

From combat and construction to healthcare and human resources, there are more than 200 different roles in the Army and 115,000 people to do them, including 28,000 reservists. Currently, about one in 10 are women. The UK's largest base is Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire, which trains all the Army's infantry and is home to 6,500 soldiers. Other bases around the country are in Aldershot, Colchester, Bicester, Edinburgh and Warminster. The Army also has bases across the world, including in Cyprus, Kenya, Germany, Belize, Gibraltar and Iraq.

ARMED FORCES DAY
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

WHERE TO ENJOY ARMED FORCES DAY

Support our military men and women on 24 June at one of these stirring summer events, or see armedforcesday.org.uk for more information.

CORNWALL A weekend of events include air displays over Falmouth Bay, a Military Village showcasing vehicles and equipment, with interactive activities, a full military parade, parachute drop, Royal Navy frigate open to the public and a Proms-style concert.

WALES Celebrations in Newport kick off with a military parade led by the Regimental Band and Corps of Drums of the Royal Welsh. Then there's the Tigers Army Parachute Display Team, live music and exhibitions. The fantastic finale is a military concert at Rodney Parade stadium.

CHESHIRE Three exciting games of Armed Forces Rugby League mark celebrations in Warrington, including the Royal Marines v Army Academy.

WEST MIDLANDS The Grade II listed Himley Hall and Park is hosting Dudley's celebration. The family fun day has a vintage vibe, and includes fairground rides, Punch and Judy and a tea tent. The highlight will be a badge presentation for veterans.

HAMPSHIRE Bring a picnic to Prom in the Park in Princes Gardens, Aldershot. Two local concert bands lead a patriotic programme of live music featuring traditional favourites such as *Rule Britannia*, *Jerusalem* and *Land of Hope and Glory*.

KENT Activities at Headcorn Aerodrome include flying training, parachuting, model flying and displays of World War Two aircraft. There will also be tank rides for the public.

THE RESERVES

Vital to our defence are the 35,000 volunteer reservists who combine civilian life with a military career and account for around one sixth of the forces.

WORDS: SALLY ROBINSON. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, JONATHAN HIPKISS PHOTOGRAPHY, SHAUN JACKSON, UK MOD CROWN COPYRIGHT 2022

Tummy troubles SORTED!

The five biggest causes of gut problems and how you can solve them, with expert advice

Poor diet

Feeding your gut microbiome – the microbes that help us digest our food – is crucial in maintaining a healthy digestive system. But it's essential for so much more, as having a diverse range of microbes in our digestive system is critical for strengthening our gut's ability to act as a protective barrier against disease and ill health, explains NHS gastroenterologist Dr Philip Hendy*. 'Our 21st-century lifestyle, including the global domination of the highly processed Western diet, is reducing the diversity and health of the ecosystem in our gut'.

✱ **Eat a wide range of different plants** Aim for 30 a week including nuts, seeds, beans and pulses, as well as lots of fruit and veg.

✱ **Reduce your consumption of ultra-processed foods** Look at food packaging labels. If there are two or more ingredients listed that you wouldn't find in the average kitchen cupboard, it's classed as ultra processed, so treat (and eat) them with caution.

✱ **Fill up on fibre** Vegetables, wholemeal bread and pulses, such as beans, lentils and chickpeas, are good ways to up your fibre, plus cereals such as Weetabix and Shredded Wheat, and porridge oats.

DRINK SMART

Caffeine and fizzy drinks can irritate the gut, so go easy on them.

BAD SLEEP

It may not seem obvious, but studies suggest a link between an unhealthy gut and poor sleep. Prioritising your shut-eye is a good idea to aid your digestive wellbeing.

✱ **Get gardening** Outside exercise is a great sleep booster, thanks to: the vitamin D you get from the sunshine on your skin; body movement, which helps bowel function; and the sunlight, which helps set your natural sleep-wake body clock.

✱ **Eat leeks** Plus onions and broccoli. They are great for prebiotics – special plant fibres that help good bacteria grow in your gut. 'Research has suggested that supporting the health of your gut through the use of prebiotics could improve your sleeping pattern,' says nutritionist Emma Thornton**.

✱ **Set a wind-down routine** Ban screens one hour before bed, and plan relaxing activities, such as a warm bath and milky drink, to help your brain and body prepare for sleep. Try to have the same get-up and go-to-bed times to establish a routine.

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Sleep Disturbances

TRY...

A herbal sleep supplement, such as A.Vogel Dormeasan Sleep Valerian-Hops Oral Drops, £12.99 for 50ml, Holland & Barrett.

Relationship stress

We all know the effect stress can have on our tummies, and in a recent survey***, 35% of people listed relationship stress specifically as a common cause of their tummy troubles. 'Stress often worsens IBS symptoms,' says Dr Hendy.

GOOD TO TALK

Talking about relationship worries can help you manage any associated stress.

✱ **Try relaxation therapies** such as yoga, massage and mindfulness to help keep stress under control.

✱ **Quit smoking** It doesn't de-stress you, in fact research shows it does the opposite, raising anxiety and tension by spiking your heart rate and blood pressure. And it damages your digestive system and gut microbiome.

✱ **Watch how much you drink** 'A glass of wine can relax you and aid peaceful digestion, but don't be tempted to drink on an empty stomach or consume too much,' says gastroenterologist Dr Nick Read†. 'Alcohol can irritate the lining of the stomach, and too much can lead to serious gastrointestinal and liver disease.' Stick to at least two alcohol-free days a week and don't exceed the recommended limit of 14 units a week.

Food triggers

An estimated one in 20 of us suffer with irritable bowel syndrome, with symptoms including diarrhoea, bloating, constipation, gas and stomach pain.

'Learning about your triggers and making small changes can make a big difference,' says Alison Reid from the IBS Network.

✱ **Keep a food diary** to help identify which foods may trigger symptoms. Common culprits include fatty, spicy and processed foods.

✱ **Talk to your GP** They can refer you to a dietitian to discuss eating habits, including the low FODMAP diet, says *WW* GP Dr Gill Jenkins. 'This involves avoiding foods that aren't easily broken down by the gut, such as some types of fruit and vegetables, milk or wheat products.'

✱ **Try probiotics for one month** to see whether it makes a difference. These live bacteria and yeasts are believed to help restore the natural balance of bacteria in your gut. Find them in yogurt, sauerkraut, and soft and aged cheese, such as Swiss cheese, Cheddar and Parmesan.

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NATURAL SCIENCE
BIOTIC COMPLEX
30

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A supplement such as Purolabs Biotic Complex, £34.99 for 30 capsules, purolabs.com

LACK OF EXERCISE

Studies suggest that people who exercise regularly have a more diverse gut microbiome. Keeping moving also helps to keep your digestive system moving healthily by increasing blood flow to your gut.

✱ **Don't sit still for long periods** Get up and move regularly, and make sure you incorporate regular activity into your week. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, as per the NHS guidelines, spread over five days.

✱ **Drink plenty of water** 'Having enough fluid with your food aids digestion, ensures adequate hydration and may help to prevent constipation,' says Dr Read. 'There's no absolute rule for how much you should drink, but remember that your food contains substantial amounts of fluid, and alcoholic drinks, concentrated fruit juice, and coffee and tea can cause dehydration.

'Examine your urine as a guide. It should be a very light straw colour. Dark yellow-to-orange urine may indicate that you need to drink some water.'

*FROM THEBETTERGUT.COM. **FROM A.VOGEL. ***FROM HOLLAND & BARRETT. †FROM LOVEYOURGUT.COM

WORDS: TANYA PEAREY. PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. CHECK WITH YOUR GP OR MEDICAL EXPERT BEFORE TAKING NEW SUPPLEMENTS

Woman's Weekly Craft Book Club

Save 30%

This month, we've chosen some of our absolute favourite books from Search Press – and, even better, you can save 30% on all of them, plus free postage (UK only).

Esme Clemo, Craft and Home Editor

Lynne Rowe, Knitting and Crochet Editor

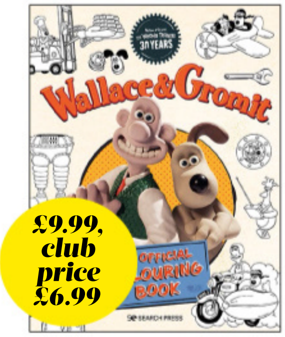
We are both passionate about all sorts of craft so we have pulled together a selection of fabulous books that we hope you will like. We will be bringing you some great offers throughout the year.

£9.99, club price £6.99

***Fun with Fat Quarters* by Wendy Gardiner**
Includes 15 projects, from doorstops and drawstring bags, to aprons and cushions.

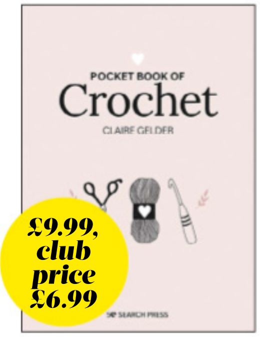
£7.99, club price £5.59

***Knit a Mini Safari* by Sachiyo Ishii**
With step-by-step instructions, these fun, simple patterns are ideal for knitters of all levels. Includes 20 patterns.



£9.99, club price £6.99

***Wallace & Gromit: The Official Colouring Book* by Aardman**
Colour in iconic scenes and classic characters from hit Aardman films, such as *A Close Shave*.



£9.99, club price £6.99

***Pocket Book of Crochet* by Claire Gelder**
From best-selling author and crafting queen Claire Gelder, this gorgeous mini guide is packed full of crochet know-how.

£12.99, club price £9.09

***Watercolour Flowers for the Absolute Beginner* by Fiona Peart**
A complete course in learning to paint flowers, packed with handy hints and tips for new artists.

£15.99, club price £11.19

***Tunisian Crochet Stitch Dictionary* by Anna Nikipirowicz**
This collection offers 150 classic and new stitches, for needlecrafters of all skill levels.

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9781800920545	*Fun with Fat Quarters*	**£6.99**		
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9781800921443	*Wallace & Gromit Colouring Book*	**£6.99**		
9781800920736	*Pocket Book of Crochet*	**£6.99**		
9781800920149	*Watercolour Flowers*	**£9.09**		
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IT'S A FUNNY OLD WORLD

'Adrenaline and nerves keep you on your toes'

THIS WEEK'S COLUMNIST Singer Engelbert Humperdinck

"Two weeks tops and I'm done with my easy chair and resting on my laurels. I have always been a tenacious Taurus. Music and being on the road are what fuels me. I love that curtain going up and, even this far down the road, I want to use music as my passport to the world for as long as I'm fit to do so.

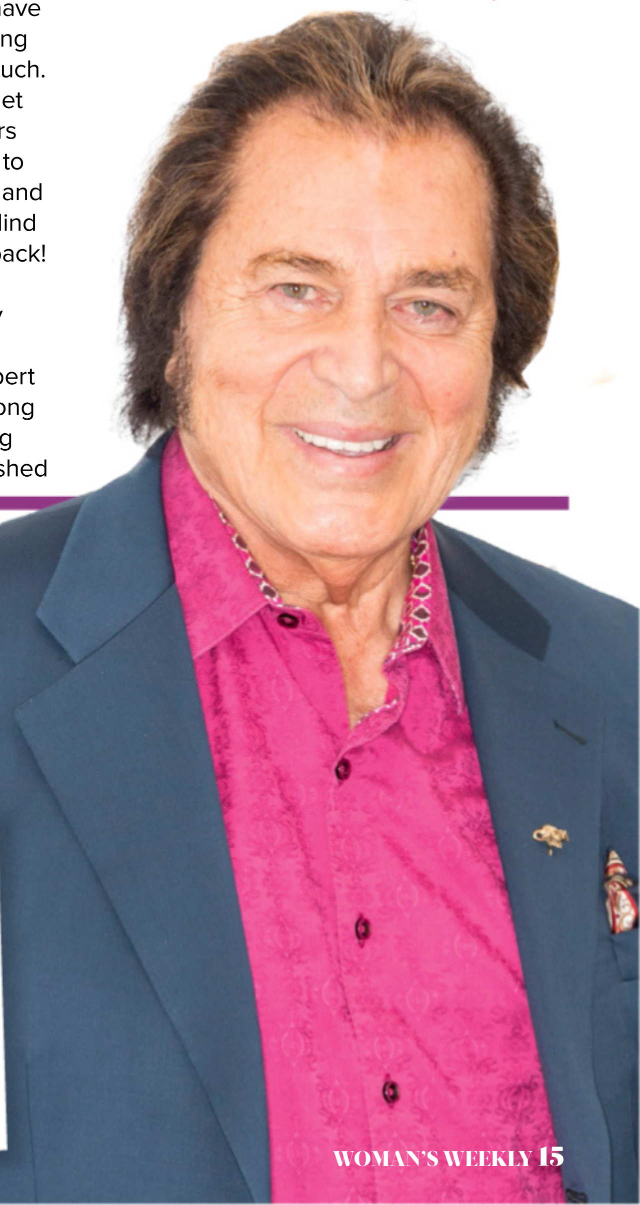
However, I do regret working so hard that I didn't see the circus that life sometimes became. We were lucky to travel the world time and time again but the time spent in each town, city, country was usually only one night – so we had no time to appreciate the gift of being there and experiencing the people and the culture. I'm making an effort to pad a few days on either side now, and explore and visit friends whom I've met over all these years of life on the road.

Slowing down for me would be a residency where the fans know where to find me so I don't have to be on planes, trains and tour buses. I'd love to do that for a while and use those saved travel hours to continue recording or get in a game of golf. I'm happy it's still a busy life. I thrive on it – I think adrenaline and nerves keep you on your toes. That's why on my 87th birthday I released [album] *All About Love*. I also have a documentary coming out soon, which has been in the pipeline for some time.

One thing I'd love to do is play an unexpected role in a movie totally against any typecasting. I didn't have much time to explore acting as I was on the road so much. Life is a movie, and I've met a lot of amazing characters along the way. I just want to step out of the sideburns and steal a moment on film. Mind you, I don't know if they would grow back!

'I'd love to play an unexpected movie role'

Sometimes I tell my assistant as I'm getting ready for the show that I really don't feel like stepping out of Arnold George Dorsey and becoming Engelbert in the spotlight. But that doesn't last long when you think of the audience paying hard-earned money to escape this rushed world. When it shut down thanks to COVID I embraced social media, shyly at first. It has been a huge connector. This travelling boy didn't know what to do about not being able to entertain and be on the road. So I reached out and checked in with those people who have faithfully followed me and have given me a global career. I'm grateful for them, I take my energy from the audience."



'My funny old week'

WHERE I'VE BEEN I've been to the stylist to get the latest measurements for a photo shoot. Who'd have thought I'd still be having my picture taken at 87 and feeling good? I just need a little help with pulling it all together.

WHAT I'VE SEEN The faces of all the interviewers on Zoom. By the end of our chats, I feel I know them and might have to have them over for a pint in my pub. I've also seen the coronation and the concert – what a spectacular time for us all to remember.

WHO I'VE MET I got to meet David Foster, pictured, again. We visited as he was getting ready to leave to do a show in Texas. I need to get out more… I'm actually shy!

WHAT I'VE BOUGHT I'm afraid I'm a bit of a late-night TV shopper, and I've just purchased some device that keeps your shoulders back, and some patches that claim to cure what hurts.

WORDS: ARIANA LONGSON. PHOTOS: GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK

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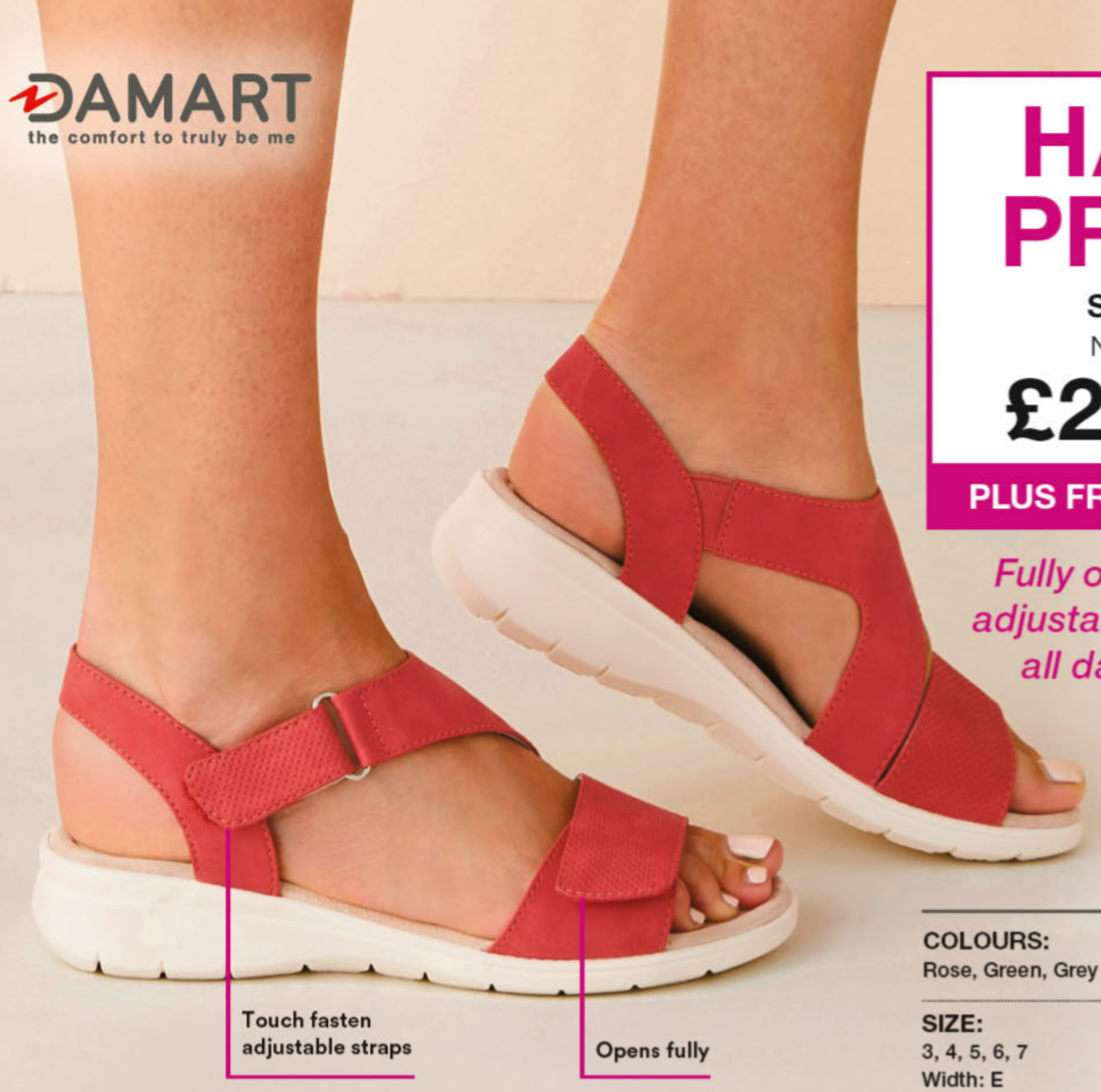

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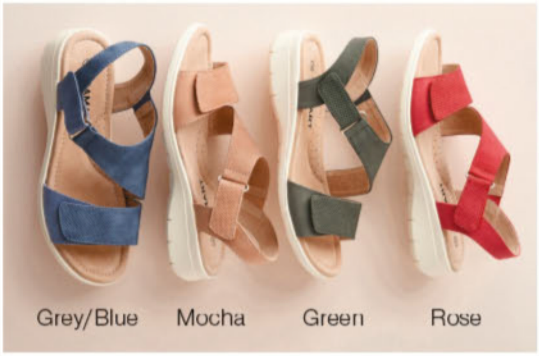

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Suncare ESSENTIALS

Keep your skin, hair and body protected with these shielding SPFs

1 SUMMER SCENT

SPF waters are brilliant if you hate sticky creams, and this one is a favourite of the beauty team. It smells heavenly, so much so that it feels like a treat to use rather than a chore. It's an invisible formula, sinking in in seconds. **Caudalie Vinosun Very High Protection Sun Water SPF50+, £32, uk.caudalie.com**

2 EXTRA PROTECTION

If you're in a really hot country or spending a lot of time outside, you may need an extra level of suncare. This hard-working buy has been formulated to protect skin from UVA and UVB rays, plus blue light and pollution. The 40ml size means it's handy for travel. **Nivea Sun UV Face Specialist Triple Protect SPF50+, £14.50, Boots**

3 HANDY SPRAY

Our pick for the body is this lightweight mist, which sinks in quickly and leaves no residue. The clever spray means it's especially handy for reaching awkward areas like legs and backs. The bottle is fully recyclable too. **Garnier Ambre Solaire SPF50+ Invisible Protect Mist Spray, £7, Tesco**

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10 PRESERVE YOUR POUT

Your lips are one of those easy-to-forget areas, and neglecting them will leave a dry, chapped pout. This smart balm contains SPF50+ protection, nourishes lips and is available in five shades, which will give a subtle pop of colour. **Bondi Sands SPF50+ Lip Balm, £4.99, sephora.co.uk**

9 HAIR HERO

Don't forget that hair can be impacted by the sun's rays too. It can cause dryness, damage and even alter your hair colour. Use a dedicated UV heat protectant to shield your locks, spritzing throughout your hair in the mornings. **Aveda Sun Care Protective Hair Veil, £24.50, lookfantastic.com**

8 HAPPY HANDS

It's easy to neglect your hands, but they're likely the most exposed part of your body – not to mention that they're one of the first areas to show signs of ageing. The UV light during the process of gel manicures is also a factor to consider, so keep hands protected daily in all weathers. **Hello Sunday The One For Your Hands SPF30, £9, Space NK**

4 RADIANT FINISH

The trick to wearing sun protection on your face is picking nice textures you want to wear every day. This is light, moisturising and gives complexions a subtle glow. It also acts as a primer and sits well under make-up. **E.l.f. Suntouchable! Whoa Glow SPF30, £14, elfcosmetics.co.uk**

5 PROTECTED PEEPERS

Facial suncare can sting eyes, so it's not something you want to apply to that area, leaving the sensitive area prone to sun damage. This new launch is designed to treat that specific area, shielding it while nourishing delicate eye skin. **Ultrasun SPF30 Eye Protection, £20, ultrasun.co.uk**

6 TOP IT UP

Most experts advise topping up your SPF protection every few hours. But who wants to smear new cream over a made-up face? This matte stick is the answer, as it glides easily over your face and won't disrupt your make-up. **Coola Classic Stick SPF30, £23, lookfantastic.com**

7 MULTITASKING MARVEL

Vitamin C is a brilliant ingredient – it helps brighten complexions. This hard-working SPF includes the vital vitamin, making it useful for everyday wear. It's also easy to blend, light and non-sticky. **L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Clinical Anti-UV Fluid SPF50+, £19.99, Boots**

WORDS: RHIANNON DERBYSHIRE

FASHION solutions

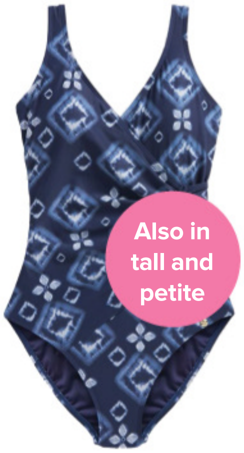
SWIM WEAR

Feel confident and comfortable in a flattering style for your shape

£42.99, sizes 8-24, Damart

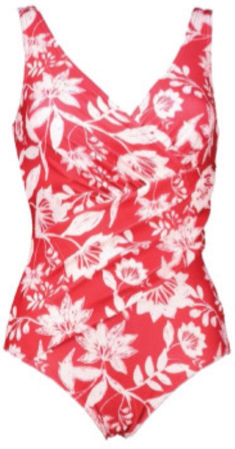
SHAPING SWIMSUITS

Designed to sculpt your shape and show off your curves, clever tummy-control panels keep the midriff in place, while a deep V-neckline will flatter a fuller bust.

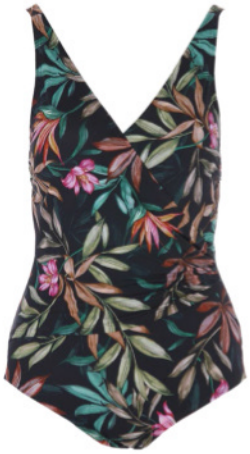


Also in tall and petite

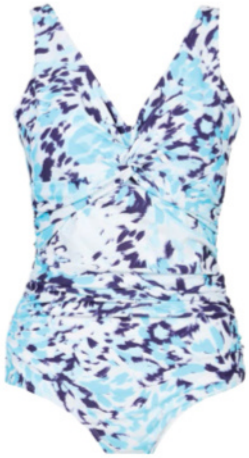
£40, sizes 6-26, Next



£18, sizes 6-26, Tu Clothing



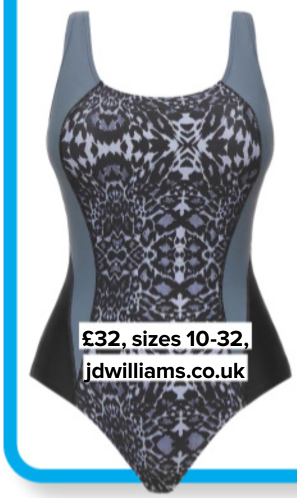
£24, sizes 10-20, Peacocks



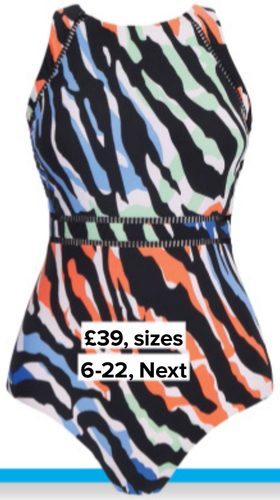
£25, sizes 10-28, Bonmarché

SPORTY SWIMSUITS

With high necklines and low-cut legs, these athletic styles are ready for action – great for serious swimmers who want to move around in comfort while being supported.



£32, sizes 10-32, jdwilliams.co.uk



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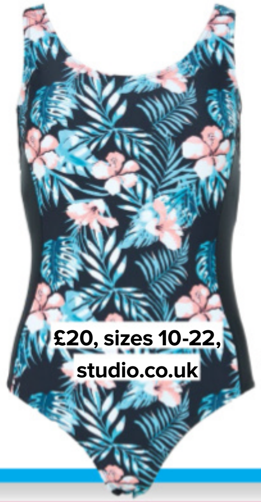
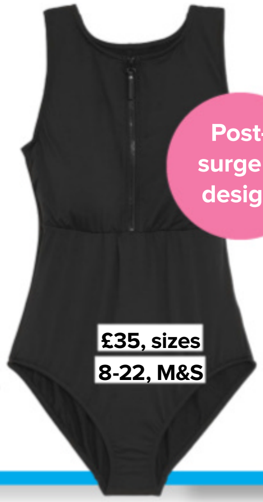


£20, sizes 10-22, studio.co.uk



Post-surgery design

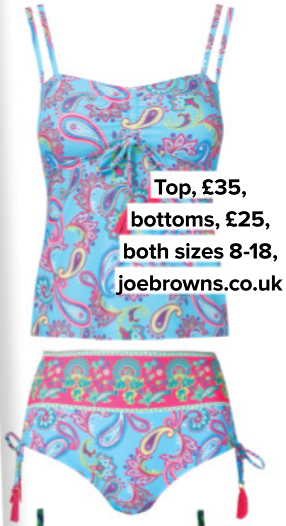
£35, sizes 8-22, M&S

COMPILED BY: JULIE PLAYER

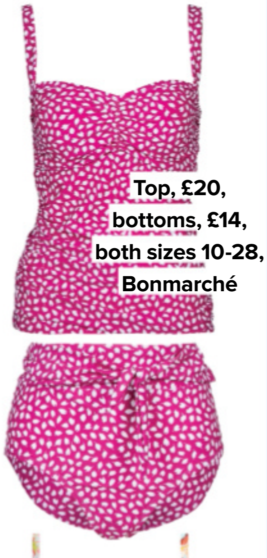
Top, £35, sizes 10-24, swim shorts, £15, sizes 10-26, both Cotton Traders; jewellery, model's own

TANKINI TOPS

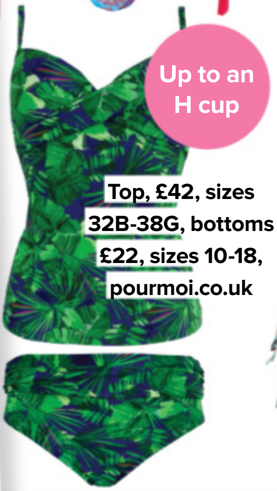
If you want the coverage of a swimsuit but the convenience of a two-piece, try a tankini. They allow you to mix and match a choice of bottoms, from sporty shorts to more high-cut styles, and are a comfortable choice if you are long in the body.



Top, £35, bottoms, £25, both sizes 8-18, joebrowns.co.uk

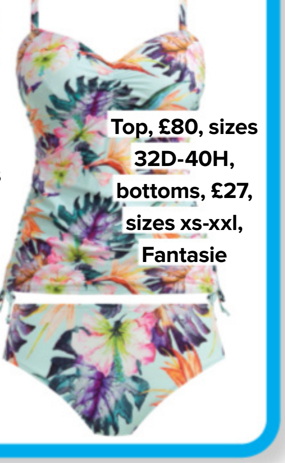


Top, £20, bottoms, £14, both sizes 10-28, Bonmarché



Up to an H cup

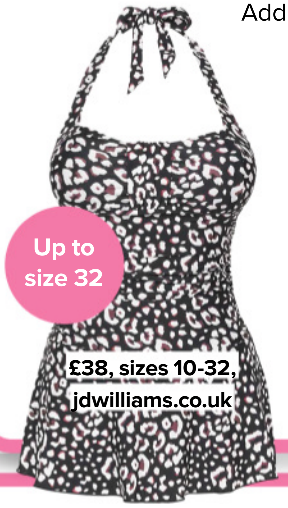
Top, £42, sizes 32B-38G, bottoms £22, sizes 10-18, pourmoi.co.uk



Top, £80, sizes 32D-40H, bottoms, £27, sizes xs-xxl, Fantasie

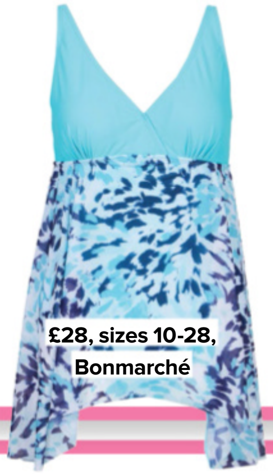
SKIRTED STYLES

If you want extra coverage, opt for a swim dress, which will boost your confidence. Add a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses for a 1950s retro feel.

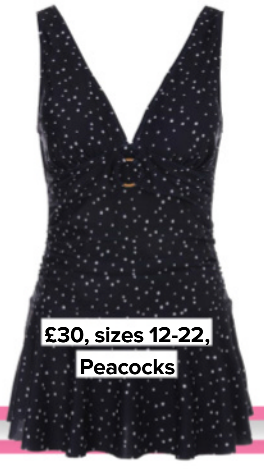


Up to size 32

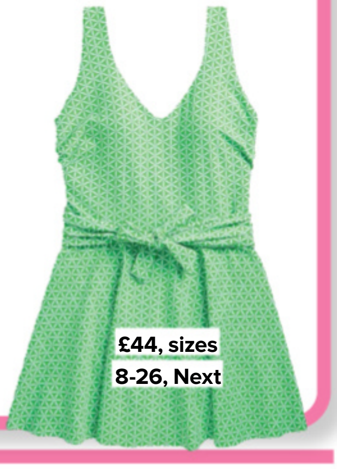
£38, sizes 10-32, jdwilliams.co.uk



£28, sizes 10-28, Bonmarché



£30, sizes 12-22, Peacocks



£44, sizes 8-26, Next

Flying SOLO

Three women share tales of their going-it-alone travel adventures

At the Tropic of Capricorn crossing in Namibia

An unforgettable encounter with gorillas in Rwanda

'Being without a companion didn't stop me seeing the world'

Vivienne Harris, 63, director of a property company, lives in London.

I started travelling later in life – I built my career and then decided I wanted to see the world. I didn't have a companion and could have been waiting forever for someone to go with. So, I went alone.

My first solo trip was to Botswana and South Africa. I love nature and wildlife, and wanted to go on a safari. I was a little nervous about being so far from home, but I'm a chatterbox and make friends easily. I loved every minute of it.

Since then, I've visited India twice, Rwanda, Greece, Spain, Italy and Costa Rica, but Rwanda was the most enthralling, as it had been a dream of mine to see the gorillas in their natural habitat.

I flew to Nairobi at the end of December 2017 and on to Kigali, doing a day's tour around the city, then drove up to a mountain lodge. I saw the golden monkeys one day, and the gorillas the next. I instantly fell in love and have amazing photos of the main silverback posing for me.

From the mountains, I headed to Lake Kivu where I danced with the Pygmies, took a boat on the lake and went up to the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The wildlife and birdlife kept me busy the rest of the time.

'I want adventures, not beach holidays'

It's easy to make new friends when you're away – already you have something in common, as you are on the same trip, experiencing the same things. Subsequently I've been away with people I've met while travelling.

I usually go on my big trips at Christmas. That's the only time the office is closed for long enough. I can get away for up to three weeks and often travel on 23 or 24 December. I'm not a big fan of Christmas, and find it can be quite depressing with the enforced jollity.

'I want adventures, not beach holidays,' I tell my friends and colleagues. I hope to see the rest of the planet while I'm still young enough to do so.

WORDS: KATE CHAPMAN

In traditional dress by Lake Titicaca, South America

‘I hope my story inspires other women to travel alone’

Sue Cockell, 53, is a blogger, travel coach and YouTuber from Hertfordshire.

I’ve always been a traveller; it’s in my blood. In my 20s I visited Africa, Europe and Australia. I planned to travel more but then I met Terry in 1996, settled down and got married. We always maximised our holidays, hopping between different places, and were always on the go. When Terry passed away eight years ago at 53, I was devastated.

My friends and family knew I loved to travel, so that became their way of helping me. I got invitations to Canada and Borneo, and spent my first birthday without Terry in Hawaii. Those trips made the year more manageable, but I knew the invites would dry up and that I was only going to places others wanted to.

I had a list of things I wanted to do; I called it my ‘Life List’ and used it as a road map to focus on. I took redundancy from my job as a sales manager, which gave me the freedom to take time to heal.

Cuba was top of my list. When my neighbours asked to rent my house for six months while they renovated theirs, I agreed. ‘I’m going on an adventure – wherever the wind takes me,’ I told my friends.

I headed for the Caribbean and attended a yoga retreat, learnt Spanish, sailed in my first regatta and made friends. It was all spontaneous. I met amazing people and when they suggested something, I generally said yes!

> ‘I relish the freedom it has given me’

Travelling in your 40s and 50s is different to your 20s – you’re savvier! We think we discover ourselves when we’re quite young. I’d been part of a couple for 18 years and that became my identity. I didn’t know who I was on my own and had to figure out how to do it alone.

I’m still making my way through my list, although I did change it, and I started blogging to encourage and inspire more women to travel solo. I’ve had many more solo adventures since and relish the freedom it has given me.

✱ **suewherewhywhat.com**

‘It was the adventure of a lifetime’

Dawn East, 45, is a primary school teacher, and a health and wellbeing coach, from Somerset.

I travelled solo for a year before the pandemic. I rode a train across Russia then visited Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan, Australia, south-east Asia and eastern Europe, and met many lovely people.

The train journey was a highlight – just the experience of sleeping on it. I was completely out of my comfort zone, there was no phone signal, so I stared out of the window, cooking whatever I could on hot water, as I was budgeting!

Another favourite memory was hiring a car in Tasmania. It was the first time I’d driven since starting my trip and I loved the freedom it gave me. The time of year was beautiful and there was no one else around.

I was saving for a mortgage deposit when I decided to go. I’d been chatting to a friend about it when she said she’d barely travelled since taking on her mortgage a few years before.

Something clicked in me. ‘There are too many places I still want to see,’ I said, making my decision to go then and there.

I had a year to plan everything. I like travelling alone – something I’d done a lot since becoming a teacher. I’m single and going alone means you don’t have to worry about what anyone else is doing.

I organised the first few months and booked my accommodation, as I needed the reassurance of knowing where I was staying. I downloaded maps and planned how I’d travel from the airports, avoiding taxis and walking wherever I could to save money.

> ‘Looking back, I’m so glad I went’

Relaxing on Apollo Bay Beach in Australia

It was lonely sometimes and there were times I wanted to stay in one place, but friends came to visit, or I’d stay with friends from previous travels. I blogged and turned it into a book, called *Heading East*.

Looking back, I’m so glad I went. Life put me in the right place at the perfect time.

Light and lovely BARBECUE

Get grilling with our healthier options, packed with sunshine flavour

Chicken nam jim

This easy marinade and dipping sauce is a flavourful way to upgrade your chicken.

SERVES 6 PREP 20 mins, plus infusing
COOK 20 mins, plus resting

- 6 skin-on chicken thighs
- Juice ½ lime
- 1tsp sugar
- 1tsp salt
- A little olive oil

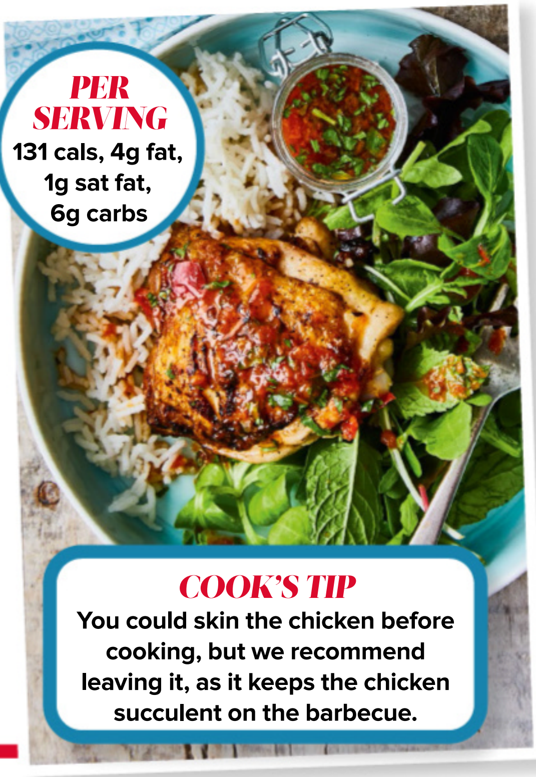
FOR THE NAM JIM DRESSING

- 1 large red chilli, deseeded and roughly chopped
- 1 red bird's-eye chilli, deseeded and roughly chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1tbsp chopped fresh coriander, plus extra to garnish
- 2tbsp grated palm sugar
- 2tbsp Thai fish sauce
- 2tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice
- Plain boiled rice and/or Asian salad leaves, to serve

1 Put the chicken in a bowl with the lime juice, sugar and salt. Stir and set aside for 10 mins. Pat dry, then rub with oil.

2 For the dressing, put chillies, garlic and a pinch of salt in a pestle and mortar (or blender) and pound to form a rough paste. Transfer to a bowl and stir in coriander, palm sugar, fish sauce and lime juice. Stir until the sugar is dissolved.

3 Light/heat the barbecue. Once hot, cook the chicken for 10 mins on each side, until charred and cooked through. Rest for 5 mins. Serve drizzled with the nam jim dressing, some cooked rice, fresh herbs and salad leaves.



PER SERVING
131 cals, 4g fat, 1g sat fat, 6g carbs

COOK'S TIP
You could skin the chicken before cooking, but we recommend leaving it, as it keeps the chicken succulent on the barbecue.

Charred aubergines with tahini

A Middle Eastern-inspired dish where the flesh of the aubergines becomes wonderfully tender and smoky as it cooks on the grill.

SERVES 6 PREP 10 mins
COOK 20 mins, plus cooling

- 3 x 300g medium aubergines, trimmed
- 2tbsp olive oil
- 1tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 150g Greek yogurt
- 4tsp tahini paste
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 1tsp lemon juice
- 2tsp black sesame seeds
- 2tbsp pomegranate molasses
- Rocket leaves, to serve
- Pomegranate seeds, to serve

1 Light/heat the barbecue. Cut each aubergine in half lengthways. Score a diamond pattern into the flesh, but don't cut through the skin. Rub the oil, thyme, and a little salt and pepper into the flesh.

2 Cook skin side down for 10 mins. Flip the aubergines over and cook for a further 10 mins until golden, softened and browned. Cool for 5 mins.

3 Meanwhile, mix the yogurt, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and some salt and pepper in a bowl.

4 Arrange the aubergine halves on plates. Top each with a spoonful of the tahini sauce and scatter with black sesame seeds, then drizzle with pomegranate molasses. Serve with rocket leaves and pomegranate seeds.

PER SERVING
124 cals, 9g fat, 3g sat fat, 7g carbs

COOK'S TIP
If you don't have pomegranate molasses, a drizzle of balsamic glaze would also work well.

Lamb cutlets with barbecued beetroot salad

This smart dish makes the most of the barbecue being on by using it to cook both the meat and the veg.

PER SERVING
360 cals, 24g fat, 7g sat fat, 8g carbs

SERVES 6 PREP 40 mins, plus cooling
COOK 6 mins, plus resting

- 12 lamb cutlets, French trimmed (ask your butcher)
- 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1tbsp dried oregano
- 500g small raw beetroot, trimmed
- 200g green beans, trimmed
- 100g feta, crumbled
- 50g baby spinach leaves
- 50g whole almonds, toasted and chopped

FOR THE WALNUT OIL AND RASPBERRY DRESSING

- 3tbsp walnut oil
- 2tsp raspberry vinegar
- 2tsp wholegrain mustard
- Pinch caster sugar

YOU WILL NEED

- Metal skewers, for cooking

1 Trim away and discard the excess fat from the cutlets. Brush the lamb with oil, rub with the oregano, and season. Set aside until ready to cook.

2 Light/heat the barbecue. Put the beetroot in cold water, bring to the boil and cook for 20 mins until just tender. Drain well, and let it cool for 20 mins. Cut the beetroot in half, and thread onto metal skewers. Cook on a hot barbecue for 5 mins each side until lightly charred. Place in a bowl.

3 Blanch the beans in lightly salted boiling water for 3 mins. Drain, refresh under cold water and dry well. Add to the beetroot with the feta, spinach and almonds.

4 Cook the lamb cutlets on a hot barbecue for 3 mins each side until charred. Transfer the cutlets to a platter; leave them to rest for 2-3 mins.

5 For the dressing, whisk the oil, vinegar, mustard, sugar, and a little salt and pepper. Pour over the beetroot salad, stir well and serve with the lamb.

COOK'S TIP

Choose small or even baby beetroot for this dish or, if unavailable, use larger beetroot but parboil them for longer, until starting to soften in the middle. >>

Mixed tomato salad with zingy lime dressing

A pretty salad with tomatoes of different shapes, sizes and colour is the perfect accompaniment to barbecue dishes.

SERVES 6 PREP 10 mins

- 650g mixed tomatoes, halved or sliced
- 2tbsp fresh coriander leaves
- 3tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Grated zest and juice 1 lime
- 2 spring onions, trimmed and very finely chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 2tsp clear honey

1 Arrange the tomatoes on a platter and scatter over the coriander leaves.

2 Mix the remaining ingredients in a bowl until evenly combined. Drizzle over the tomatoes and serve.

PER SERVING
80 cals, 6g fat, 1g sat fat, 4g carbs

PER SERVING
235 cals, 19g fat, 3g sat fat, 0g carbs

Swordfish, lemon and bay leaf skewers

Fresh bay leaves are best for this recipe. You can use dried, but soak them for one hour in cold water to soften before use.

SERVES 6 PREP 10 mins, plus marinating
COOK 4 mins

- 500g swordfish steak or other MSC-certified fish
- 1tbsp olive oil
- 1tsp ras el hanout
- 18 fresh bay leaves
- 1 lemon, cut into 18 chunks
- 100g mayonnaise
- 1tsp harissa paste
- Extra olive oil and lemon juice, to serve

YOU WILL NEED

- Bamboo skewers, soaked in cold water for 1 hr

1 Cut the swordfish into 30 cubes and put in a shallow ceramic/glass dish. Add the oil and ras el hanout, stir to coat the fish, then leave to marinate for 1 hr.

2 Light/heat the barbecue. Thread the fish, bay leaves and chunks of lemon onto the skewers and cook on a hot barbecue for 3-4 mins, turning halfway, until cooked.

3 Mix the mayonnaise with harissa paste. Drizzle the skewers with oil and a squeeze of lemon juice to serve.

COOK'S TIP

Ras el hanout is a North African spice mix available from larger supermarkets. Use ground turmeric as an alternative.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING: LOUISE PICKFORD. PHOTOS: IAN WALLACE

Warm peaches, labneh and berry granita

The peaches are just warmed through rather than cooked, meaning they stay fresh and light. Add to the grill as it cools so they're ready for dessert.

PER SERVING
190 cals, 8g fat, 4g sat fat, 24g carbs

SERVES 6 PREP 20 mins, plus freezing COOK 10 mins

- ✱ 125g labneh or Greek yogurt
- ✱ 2tbsp maple syrup
- ✱ 3 large firm peaches, halved and stoned
- ✱ 30g butter, diced
- ✱ 4 amaretti biscuits, lightly crushed

FOR THE SUMMER BERRY GRANITA

- ✱ 50g granulated sugar
- ✱ 250g mixed summer berries, fresh or frozen
- ✱ 1tbsp cassis

1 For the granita, combine the sugar and 65ml water in a saucepan, stirring over a low heat for 2-3 mins until the sugar dissolves. Simmer for 3 mins then remove from the heat. Allow to cool completely.

2 Mix the syrup, berries and cassis in a blender until smooth. Pass through a fine sieve into a shallow tin and freeze for 4 hrs. Break up the semi-frozen granita with a fork, then continue to do this at 30-min intervals until all the grantia is just frozen.

3 Stir the labneh/yogurt and 1½tbsp of the maple syrup together until smooth. Set aside.

4 Light/heat the barbecue. Put 2 large pieces of foil on a flat surface. Arrange the peaches, cut side up, in the centre. Top each peach half with a little butter and the remaining maple syrup. Draw the sides of the foil together and seal the parcel closed.

5 Put the parcel on a hot barbecue and cook for about 10 mins until the peaches are warmed through. You will be able to hear them spitting and bubbling.

6 Arrange the warm peaches on plates. Top each half with the labneh and crushed amaretti. Serve with some of the granita spooned over the peaches.

COOK'S TIP
Labneh is a Middle Eastern fresh cheese made with sheep's milk. Greek yogurt makes a good substitute.

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CLUBBING together

Join a club and get ready to reap the rewards

Becoming a member of a club brings many benefits. You'll get to see new places or do new things, make memories, learn new skills – and pass your skills on to others – as well as find like-minded people who have fun doing the same things you do. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Become a bookworm

Joining a book club can be a very rewarding experience – it's a great way to meet new people and have interesting discussions. Your local library, community centre or bookshop will have details of those nearest to you. Alternatively, you could start your own!

Learn a new skill

Fancy learning something new or brushing up your skills? Website u3a.org.uk is sure to have something you'll love. It comprises local and online groups dedicated to learning, with much of it free. Events and workshops range from everything from flower craft and drawing to laughter yoga and geology.

Pick up some litter

Who'd have thought there was a group that could keep you active, social *and* make a difference to the environment in your neighbourhood? Join a litter-picking group and you can do exactly that! Find one at cleanupuk.org.uk or keepbritaintidy.org

Get walking

Not just for those who enjoy hiking, the Ramblers Association (ramblers.org.uk) offers Wellbeing Walks – short strolls (10-90 minutes) over easy terrain that are open to everyone, even those who have mobility limitations. There's no need to plan a route or find a buddy, as each one is led by an experienced leader. Alternatively, see if your local authority runs Health or Wellbeing Walks – volunteer-led groups that provide some social time and exercise.

Try a social club

Darby and Joan clubs are volunteer-run social clubs and events for older people, and provide a wide range of activities from dancing, crafts and gentle exercises to specialist interests, as well as the opportunity to catch up with friends. Many of their events offer the opportunity to try something out with taster sessions before you commit.

Look for a meetup

Check out meetup.com, which helps people with similar interests get together. And scan shop or community noticeboards, local Facebook groups and community websites to find out about social groups in your area. Age UK (ageuk.org.uk) runs several groups, as well as Friendship Centres, which organise activities, day trips and more.

Enjoy park life

Our green spaces need looking after, so why not find out if there's a 'friends of' group for your local park? Usually composed of volunteers, they organise gardening sessions, community events and help improve parks. Contact your local council to find out more.

WORDS: RACHEL OGDEN.
PHOTOS: GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK

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3 SIGNS THAT…

You might be lacking iodine

1 DRY, FLAKY SKIN **Up your intake of white fish and dairy products, which are top sources of iodine, necessary for the production of thyroid hormones, important for metabolism.**

2 FEELING COLD ALL THE TIME **'Iodine is required for the production of thyroxine, a thyroid hormone that helps to regulate body temperature,' says nutritionist Dr Naomi Newman-Beinart.**

3 UNEXPECTED WEIGHT GAIN **Or a swelling at the front of your neck or memory problems. Consider a supplement – try Dr Seaweed's Weed & Wonderful Organic Scottish Seaweed, £20 for 60 capsules, Boots.**

WILD SWIMMING KEEPS ME FIT AND HEALTHY

Naomi Smith, 53, from Cornwall

Being active is important for my physical and emotional wellbeing. I appreciate my body and what it does for me, and I want to keep my range of activities as broad as possible as I get older.

In a typical week, I swim three or four times and go for two or three walks. I'm a yoga teacher, so run three weekly classes, and I also Morris dance, which is great for memory, coordination – and not taking yourself too seriously!

Trying something new and being open-minded about how to stay active is really important. I started chill swimming the summer before COVID-19, and it was a saving grace for meeting new people and forming strong friendships.

I really enjoy getting in the water all year round. It's different every time – the conditions, the company and the way it appeals to your senses. It makes you extremely present. Watching the waves, deciding on your strategy to stay safe and checking in with those around you. I call it my factory reset. I love the sense of adventure and risk, within reason, and prioritising my wellbeing.

I'm very fortunate to live in Cornwall, just three miles from beaches, and a lot of my activity and wellness is based on being outside in or near the sea. I find indoor activities like the gym boring, repetitive and competitive!

I try to eat seasonally and have a balanced diet. I tend to use supplements if I feel the need, rather than all the time, although I generally start the day with a barley grass powder, which I mix with water. And I take Cytoplan's Immune Complete 2 multivitamin, £26.50 for 60 capsules, cytoplan.co.uk

NEWSFLASH

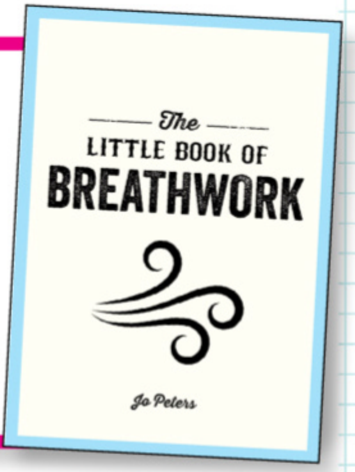
New drug slows Alzheimer's by a third

A new dementia medication has been shown to reduce the rate of cognitive decline in Alzheimer patients. Donanemab works by attacking toxic proteins in the brain, believed to be responsible for some of the progression of the disease. The drug could be available as early as 2025.

New read

***THE LITTLE BOOK OF BREATHWORK* (£6.99, VIE)**

Find calm, boost your energy levels and improve your focus with this beginner's guide by Jo Peters to the ancient art of breathwork – combining breathing, movement and mindfulness for better health. It includes easy-to-follow, step-by-step techniques that you can use wherever and whenever you need them.



WORDS: TANYA PEAREY. PHOTOS: GETTY. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. CHECK WITH YOUR GP OR MEDICAL EXPERT BEFORE TAKING NEW SUPPLEMENTS

Doctor Gill

ADVICE FROM OUR WOMAN'S WEEKLY DOCTOR

Coping with TREMORS

This is an uncontrollable, repetitive movement anywhere in the body

There are many different presentations of tremor – there's rest tremor, occurring at rest, easing on movement, worsening if anxious, and most common in Parkinson's disease.

There's kinetic/action tremor, which occurs on movement, and postural tremor, which occurs when maintaining position such as reaching out an arm. There's intention tremor, triggered by intentionally moving a limb, and task specific tremor, which can be triggered by an activity like writing. Idiopathic dystonic tremor is associated with dystonia (see below), usually hands, head or voice.

The causes of tremor are complex and varied. It's a common problem in many neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis. If you have a tremor, talk to your GP, who will assess you and refer you to an appropriate specialist. Essential tremor is one of the most frequent neurological movement disorders, 10 times more common than Parkinson's, causing rhythmic trembling of the hands, head, legs, trunk or voice, affecting people of any age, gender or race. For most, it's inherited, usually noticed in middle age but can begin at birth. Occasional use of propranolol, primidone or benzodiazepines (diazepam, clonazepam), even alcohol, may decrease severity and help in high-stress situations but there's no cure. Medical treatments available for essential tremor also ease symptoms but aren't curative.

Primary orthostatic tremor (POT) is unintentional rhythmic muscle movement of one or more parts of the body, usually a fast (13-18 cycles per second) tremor of the legs when standing upright, that progressively worsens. It typically causes unsteadiness and may be associated with mild Parkinsonian features. Dystonia – uncontrollable and sometimes painful muscle spasms caused by incorrect signals from the brain – has many different types, affecting over 70,000 people in the UK in widely differing ways,

Tremor treatments

✱ ALCOHOL Two units may temporarily improve essential tremor in 50% of sufferers for about four hours, but a rebound effect may worsen the tremor next morning.

✱ MEDICATIONS Propranolol, benzodiazepines for high-stress situations; levodopa and dopamine agonists for Parkinson's; clonazepam for POT; Botox is sometimes used for head or voice tremors.

✱ MAGNETIC RESONANCE-GUIDED FOCUSED ULTRASOUND This is a safe and incisionless procedure for essential tremor treatment. High-intensity focused ultrasound destroys small areas of brain tissue responsible for the tremor.

✱ SURGERY TECHNIQUES This includes brain surgery to implant a device in the chest wall with electrodes to the brain. It provides continuous deep-brain stimulation to block signals causing the tremor.

Ibuprofen and pregnancy

A huge analysis of 1.8 million pregnancies has shown slightly increased rates of major congenital malformations and low birth weight in babies of mothers who took non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, during early pregnancy. The risk was highest with a subgroup called cyclo-oxygenase-2 selective inhibitors (coxibs), often used for inflammatory arthritis, and when NSAIDs had been used for over 10 days). See your doctor if you're planning pregnancy and take NSAIDs.

POLYPILLS FOR HYPERTENSION

A review of 18 studies gives a thumbs up to low-dose triple and quadruple polypill combinations (three or four different antihypertensive medications contained in a single tablet, thus making them easier to manage), as being effective and safe to treat stage 2 hypertension (blood pressure over 140/90mm Hg). Current NICE guidelines don't suggest combination medication until step 3, and even then only double medication pills.

PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK.
DR GILL IS UNABLE TO OFFER INDIVIDUAL ADVICE OR SEE INDIVIDUAL PATIENTS. ADVICE GIVEN HERE IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY. SEEK HELP FROM YOUR GP IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL PROBLEM

with no cure. In neuropathic tremor, a peripheral neuropathy occurs when there is damage to the nerves in the limbs. It can be associated with an action tremor and typically occurs in patients with chronic inflammation of their peripheral nerves, where the inflammation damages the myelin coat of the nerves, also known as a demyelinating neuropathy. Neuropathic tremor responds poorly to medication.

Tremors can be difficult to live with, and counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) will help you learn to cope with it. Complementary therapies can help people with tremors, although it's not guaranteed that any complementary therapy will work for you. Consult with relevant professionals before embarking on any therapy. For further advice and support contact the National Tremor Foundation – see tremor.org.uk/medication-treatments

True or false?

B12 deficiency can leave you feeling drowsy

True – in addition to common causes of excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS), such as sleep apnoea, circadian rhythm disorders, depression and narcolepsy, vitamin B12 deficiency is also a rare cause of EDS and it's relatively common in older patients. Blood vitamin B12 levels should be specifically checked, even if the blood count is otherwise normal.

4 FIXES FOR...

Scalds

1 **TAKE ACTION** Remove from the heat source immediately and remove clothing or jewellery near the scalded skin, but don't move anything stuck to the skin.

2 **COOL THE SCALD** Put the area under cool or lukewarm running water for 20 minutes. Don't use ice, iced water, or any creams or greasy substances like butter.

3 **KEEP WARM** Ensure they keep warm with a blanket, taking care not to rub it against the scald. Raising the affected area, if possible, helps reduce swelling.

4 **COVER THE SCALD** After cooling, cover the scald by placing a layer of cling film over it, or a clean plastic bag if the hand is scalded. Seek urgent medical advice.

Q How can my husband manage his erectile problems? He's not allowed to take Viagra

A There are several tablets (and now a nasal spray), including Viagra, called PD5 inhibitors, but they may not suit you if you have heart disease or take certain medications.

Other treatments aren't as easy to use – the vacuum pump, penile injections, intra-urethral pellets or creams help some men if motivated enough, but need prescriptions and medical professional instruction on their use. Urology surgeons can check his testosterone levels and prescribe replacement hormones if needed, or even surgically implant devices for temporary or permanent erections. On a simpler level, counselling helps many men who have developed performance anxiety – common once a man has had erectile issues, even if there's no physical disorder. A new treatment, Erexon, is available from your pharmacy without prescription – a gel that you massage onto the tip of the penis, it affects similar chemical pathways to those that the PD5 inhibitors work on.

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LET COUNSELLOR KEREN LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD

My neighbour's dog is the problem

Q My dog and a neighbour's dog got into a fight, and I was bitten by the neighbour's dog when I tried to separate them. I want their dog to wear a muzzle when out, as I worry it might happen again. The neighbour says only if mine does. But my dog didn't – and wouldn't – bite anyone.

Lynn, Stevenage

A If you had asked your neighbour before this incident if they thought their dog would bite someone, what do you think they would have said? That it wasn't possible? Dogs are unpredictable and, when provoked, this can happen. Your neighbour may be being difficult because they don't want to muzzle their dog, but they also may be suggesting a precautionary solution to a possible future problem. You could talk to your vet about this and ask their professional advice.

How do I get my daughter on board?

Q Someone told me about a grandmother who wrote a letter to their grandchild to be passed on when they die. I'm 78 and it got me thinking – I'd love to write my story for my grandchildren. There's so much family history that gets lost with each generation. But my daughter says it's morbid.

Robin, Berkhamsted

A I think that's a lovely idea, and I'm sure that your grandchildren will cherish your writing. It sounds like it touched a raw nerve for your daughter. Maybe she doesn't want to think of a time when you're not here, and doesn't want to think you're planning for that time. There are two things here. One, of course, is to write your story and leave instructions for the distribution of the letter with your will. Your solicitor will know how to do this. The other is to have a chat with your daughter and gently help her come to terms with the next stages in your life.

Our relationship expert Keren Smedley has more than 20 years' experience. Keren welcomes your letters, emails and texts, but she cannot reply to individual cases and will select correspondence at random for publication.

I don't know who to believe

Q I run a small admin business that services small companies that can't afford to have an administrator. We generally do the work from home but sometimes go into someone's office. One of my staff was in a firm and they asked her to leave. They said she was unhelpful and rude. I can't afford to have complaints. She says they've made this up. I don't know what to do.

Trish, Manchester

A It's very difficult when two people are describing an event where you weren't present. I would suggest you ask the company to set up a meeting with you, your staff member and the person who made the complaint. The two parties can talk about the event in a neutral space so they can understand each other's perspective. Very often you'll find that there was a misunderstanding that can easily be resolved.

Must I invite her?

Q My sister has been widowed for eight years and is bitter about her situation. I understand it's hard for her but she grumbles and moans at every family occasion, and makes it unpleasant for the rest of us. We're having a party for our son's 21st and our daughter's 18th, and I don't want her there. My mother says if I don't invite her, she and my father won't come.

Sharon, Devon

A It sounds as though your sister is struggling with the grieving process and is finding it hard to cope. I know that isn't what you were asking about but I wonder if supporting her to find some counselling would be a better way to manage the situation than excluding her from the party. Talk to her and say you want to help. Cruse would be a good place to start (cruse.org.uk or call 0808 808 1677). Also, have you asked your children if they want their aunt at their party? If she's to be excluded, then it needs to be their decision, not yours. Your parents may feel differently if it comes from their grandchildren, but they also have the right not to come if they are uncomfortable that your sister has been excluded. I do hope you can find it in your hearts to empathise with her pain and accept she's struggling. It is your choice as to whether her behaviour spoils it for you – you could choose to just ignore it.

MAIN PHOTO (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY

Easy updates for your KITCHEN

Simple ideas to refresh the hub of your home

1 CHANGE LINENS

For a fast update, switch up your everyday fabrics such as tea towels, oven gloves, place mats and napkins in a coordinating colour or pattern that reflects a new theme or trend. Why not try gingham in a cheerful pink or lemon? Taking a nod from quintessentially English chocolate box cottages, the checked style is currently hitting not only the fashion catwalks but the home decor scene too.

✱ Jug, £22, teapot, £25, butter dish, £14, place mats, £14 for two, napkins, £12 for two, dinnerware, from £3.50, all John Lewis & Partners

Checked tea towels, £10 for five, Habitat

WORDS: LIZZIE HUDSON

Barnyard Designs herb pots, £14.95 for three, amazon.co.uk

2 BRING IN HERBS

There's nothing better than grabbing a handful of home-grown herbs when you're cooking your favourite spag bol. Bring the real deal into your kitchen with potted varieties that look great and serve a practical need. If you can't be fussed with tending to them, but want the on-trend look of having greenery indoors, go for artificial plants instead – they'll boost your mood just like fresh ones and add a splash of colour too.

✱ Chopping boards, from £14 each, vases, from £3 each, ceramic serving platter, £14, dipping bowl, £5.50, spice rack, £12, all Dunelm. Other items, stylist's own

3 INJECT COLOUR

Dare to go for a bold shade and paint your cupboards? It's easier and more cost-effective than you may think. Prep is the most important part, so no shortcuts! First, remove the doors, thoroughly clean them with degreaser, remove their handles and give them a light sand – then you can begin painting. A couple of coats of suitable paint and you'll have transformed your kitchen in no time.

✱ Marylebone Gloss Ivory flat metro tiles, £23.95 per sq m, Walls and Floors. Other items, stylist's own

Eggshell paint in Persipan pink, £49 for 2.5ltr, Coat Paints

Teapot, £40, Rose & Grey

5 HANG SHELVES

Think creatively about adding extra storage solutions. A floating shelf is ideal for displaying your occasional-use glassware, a teapot and jugs, but also becomes a nifty place to store mugs. Screw cup hooks onto the shelf's underside and show off your favourites by hanging them from their handles.

✱ Embossed glass tumblers, £3 each, jug, £10, egg cups, £2.25 each, ribbed mugs, £10 for four, bread bin, £20, metal storage canister, £4, double oven glove, £7, tea towels, £6 for three, all Wilko. Other items, stylist's own

4 SORT YOUR PANTRY

Whether you have a walk-in pantry or a standard wall cupboard, it's important to get your store cupboard essentials orderly. Make a feature of cereals, pasta and grains by decanting them into jars – be sure to date and label them – and use boxes and trays to keep other items neat. Place items that you use frequently on the middle shelves, and anything else towards the top and bottom. With everything tidy and close to hand, it's easy to adopt the first-in, first-out approach so nothing goes to waste.

✱ Assorted pantry items, all B&M

Round glass storage jars, from £6.99 each, ProCook

6 CHOOSE NEW FITTINGS

Changing the handles and knobs on your cabinets is a fast and affordable way to make a difference to how your kitchen looks. Slim, sleek designs are still the interior designer's favourite, especially in the hottest metallic hues – ditch silver and choose anything from brushed golden brass to champagne bronze and rose gold.

✱ Pre-loved reinstalled kitchens, prices vary, usedkitchenexchange.co.uk

Tinkisso colour pop Miami pink kitchen tap, £146.99, dowsingandreynolds.com

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LOST summers

Bittersweet memories came flooding back. Could Anne ever recapture that magic again?

Are you OK?' Brian slipped his arm around Anne's shoulders as they stood in the driveway.

She nodded. 'It just… it makes you realise how long it's been,' she said.

Childhood summers at Le Coquelicot had seemed endless. She remembered the first time, sitting on her father's shoulders, that they'd made her way along the tree-lined drive to the tiny stone building. The excitement when she'd been allowed to turn the key.

Inside was like a cave – dark and damp and smelling of mildew. But when Dad had flung open the shutters, light flooded in. Aged seven, she'd felt as if her father had cast a spell on the place, turning it from forbidding to magical.

She remembered exploring the garden with her little sister Isobel, the grass up to her waist. Their mum calling from the kitchen not to go far, to look out for ticks. The man who came with a tractor and razed the grass to the ground, and how upset they'd been, until Dad told them the ground was now flat enough for a paddling pool.

'We've got our work cut out'

Looking at the drive now, tangled and overgrown, Anne felt a pang. Three years since Dad had left the property, closed the gate. Had he known, she wondered, on some level, how long it would be before it was opened again?

'We'll get someone to cut it back,' Brian said reassuringly as he pushed brambles aside.

She nodded. It was important to be practical. Still, something about the way the tendrils created a barrier seemed almost hostile. 'It's like they don't want us to enter,' she said.

'More like Sleeping Beauty's castle,' Brian replied. 'Waiting to be woken up – to come to life again.'

She smiled. He always put a positive spin on things.

In her mind, a tiny Isobel dashed past running to the front door, a loaf of French bread – still warm – in her hands. Anne would hang back, walk with their father, holding the bag of crumbling pastries as carefully as porcelain.

'Mummy! We're back!' Isobel would cry, as if they'd been away for years.

Then they'd sit together at the wooden table for breakfast, looking over the countryside, dotted with stone houses and, right on the horizon, the tall fir trees that surrounded the swimming lake.

A thorn cut into her ankle, bringing her back to reality. 'Ouch!' she said, bending to rub the snaking scratch just above her sandal.

'All right?' Brian said.

'Yes. Just these stupid thorns,' she said, surprised to find her eyes were filling with tears. It wasn't the pain of the scratch, but the thought of Dad's illness. The three years of fighting. Three years of lost summers.

They'd all come to Le Coquelicot at least once a year. In time, there were boyfriends, then Brian, the children. Then the children had grown and lost interest, and it had been just the four of them, sometimes six with Isobel and her husband.

Now just two of them, and not a relaxing break ahead. They had days of clearing, organising and dusting, trying to find the magic her father had all those years ago – to turn the house back into itself again.

Brian rattled the key in the lock and it clicked, the door swinging open. And there it was, the dark interior – the smell of damp that transported her back to that very first day, although her memories had faded and were hard to clutch.

She hesitated on the threshold as Brian strode in, felt his way to the catch and opened the windows. The light flooded in to reveal dust, the heartbreaking sight of a half-read newspaper, now out of date.

She was glad Dad wasn't there to see it.

'Well, looks like we've got our work cut out,' Brian said, sensing her mood and going over to her with a smile. 'But cheer up, nothing that a bit of tidying up won't fix.'

She nodded. She was glad now that they'd suggested they come out first. That the house might need a bit of TLC before they could enjoy it as they'd used to.

Dad was better, but he needed a break, not to visit France and hack down brambles.

She breathed deeply, feeling the past seep into the present.

Three years apart – but she was determined to make up for lost time.

THE END

Gillian Harvey, 2023

✱ *One French Summer* by Gillian Harvey (£12.99, Boldwood Books) is out now.

© FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED, 2023. PHOTO (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY

Small-island ESCAPES

Do you love the idea of taking off to an island? If so, try these compact European options

Colourful Kastellorizo will enchant you

Eilean Shona, Scotland

If you saw spring's *Peter Pan & Wendy* movie, you may love the private Scottish west-coast island where JM Barrie penned a 1920 screenplay of his original story. Around Eilean Shona's manor house you'll discover mossy woods, moorland, hills and sandy seasides in appropriately fairy tale fashion. Also scattered about are 10 bright, vibrant holiday cottages designed by Vanessa Branson, Sir Richard's sister. These range from the new, romantic Sail Loft, with its mini sauna and splendid sea views, to an old schoolhouse lit by gas lamps. Whether it be wild swimming, sketching pine martens, crabbing or rambling to whale-watching spots, guests can plan slow, soulful days.

✱ **Seven nights self-catering for up to two from £1,100, including boat crossings, from April-October; eileanshona.com**

Relax on an idyllic Scottish island

Mando, Denmark

Crossing dunes, marshes and mudflats, the four-mile gravel track connecting mainland Denmark's west to Mandø can be driven twice a day. Alternatively, travel across by big-tyred tractor bus; most day trippers do this before leaving the same way a few hours later. Linger overnight in one of Mandøpigen's amenity-packed, four-person apartments, however, and you'll soon have the tidal island mostly to yourself – save for the 30-odd permanent inhabitants. Some visitors follow walking trails across the farm fields to a 17th-century chapel and 19th-century windmill. Others swim off vast North Sea beaches, birdwatch, go on oyster safaris or visit thousands-strong seal colonies. Whatever you choose, Café Mandøpigen's superb meals, leaning on local cheeses and seafoods, are not to be missed.

✱ **Apartments from £101 room-only; bb-mandoe.dk. Fly to Billund and drive to Ribe.**

Enjoy Mandø's stunning scenery

Cies Islands, Spain

Francis Drake supposedly buried some long-lost loot in this northwestern Spanish archipelago. It sounds unlikely but there's definitely treasure here: arrivals from mainland Galicia are greeted by forested-peaks, perfectly white shores and crystal-clear waters, but no cars or resorts. Tourists are capped at 2,200 a day – which sounds a lot until you realise that the three linear isles are four-and-a-half miles long. It's actually easy to find a deserted strip of sand or empty, viewpoint-bound trail. Three terraced restaurants supply excellent fish dishes. The lone accommodation is a no-fuss campsite containing fixed tents with pillows and proper mattresses.

✱ **Fixed two-person tents from £47 per night, including a visitor permit; campingislascies.com. Return ferries from Vigo from £44pp; mardeons.es**

Wander along the pristine beaches

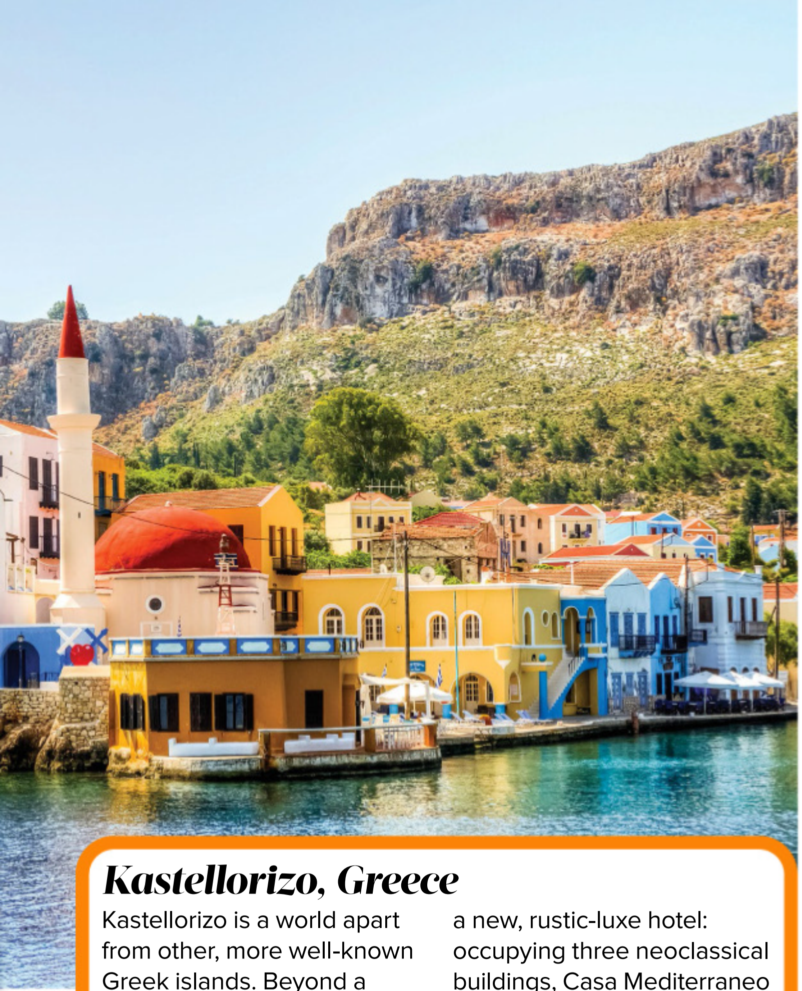
Bask in Prisnjak's beautiful sunsets

Prišnjak, Croatia

Fancy a Dalmatian Island all to yourself? Just 400m long by 230m wide, Prišnjak ('prish-nyak') hosts one building: its 19th-century lighthouse, now Villa Asenia. Alongside three en-suite bedrooms and a wine cellar, residents can enjoy a gazebo, Jacuzzi, barbecue and waterside sun deck. There's snorkelling, and a motorboat lets you roam the Šibenik Archipelago. Murter, a larger isle to the east, tempts most thanks to vineyards and Roman remains. Some escapist days, however, might be spent simply on Prišnjak, following dry-stone walls into shady pine groves or gasping at stupendous sunsets.

✱ **Seven nights self-catering for up to six from £4,179, picking up the boat on Murter; jamesvillas.co.uk. Fly to Zadar or Split.**

WORDS: RICHARD MELLOR. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, MIKE ALEXANDER/WTSWW



Kastellorizo, Greece

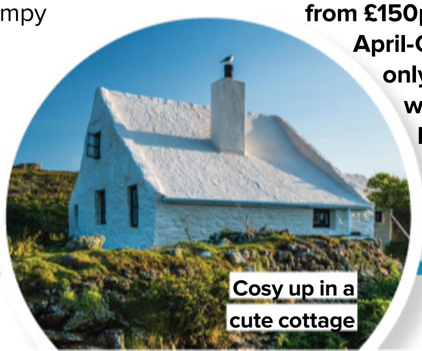
Kastellorizo is a world apart from other, more well-known Greek islands. Beyond a beautiful natural harbour with pastel-shade mansions come a few sleepy tavernas; goat tracks then lead to rocky swimming coves, monasteries, an old crusader castle and an archaeological museum. Less agile visitors can board guided boat trips to nearby islets with small sandy beaches. There's even a new, rustic-luxe hotel: occupying three neoclassical buildings, Casa Mediterraneo has six spacious suites beside lavender-scented gardens. When possible, dinners and sunset drinks are served on its terrace.

✱ Doubles from £125 with breakfast; casamediterraneohotel.com. Aegean Airlines flies from Rhodes to Kastellorizo four times a week.

Skokholm, Wales

Here's one for nature lovers. Together with nearby Skomer – its bigger, higher-profile sibling – off-grid Skokholm, off the coast of Pembrokeshire, hosts half of the world's Manx shearwater birds during early summer. Not to mention puffins, porpoises, Risso's dolphins and grey seals. Not quite half-a-square-mile in size, this bumpy speck in the Celtic Sea is characterised by carpets of white sea campion flowers atop sandstone cliffs. Unlike Skomer, day-visitors aren't permitted, meaning that the 26 (at most) guests in its cutely renovated cowsheds or cottages – with a shop and shared kitchen to hand – can stay in splendid, squawky isolation. Just don't forget your camera.

✱ Three nights self-catering from £150pp, from April-October only; welsh wildlife.org. Return boat transfers from £27.50pp.



Cosy up in a cute cottage

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Woman's Weekly

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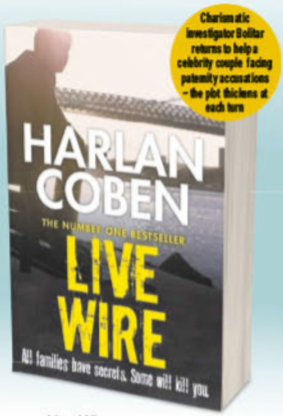
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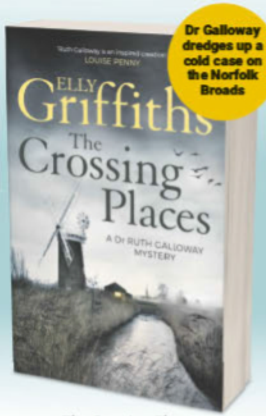
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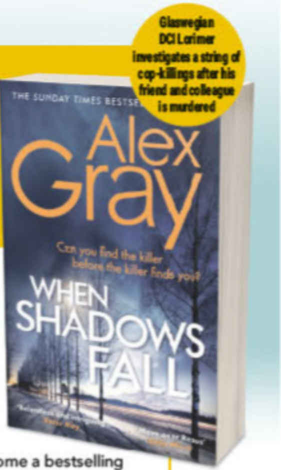
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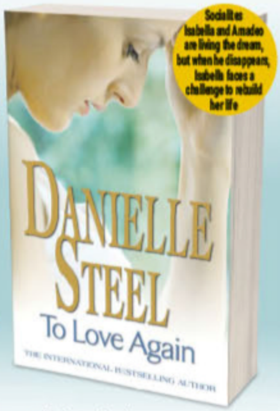
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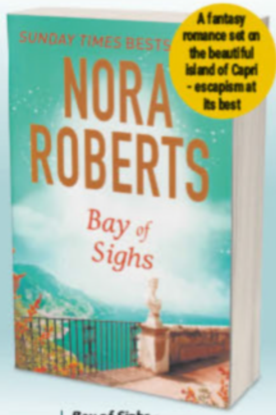
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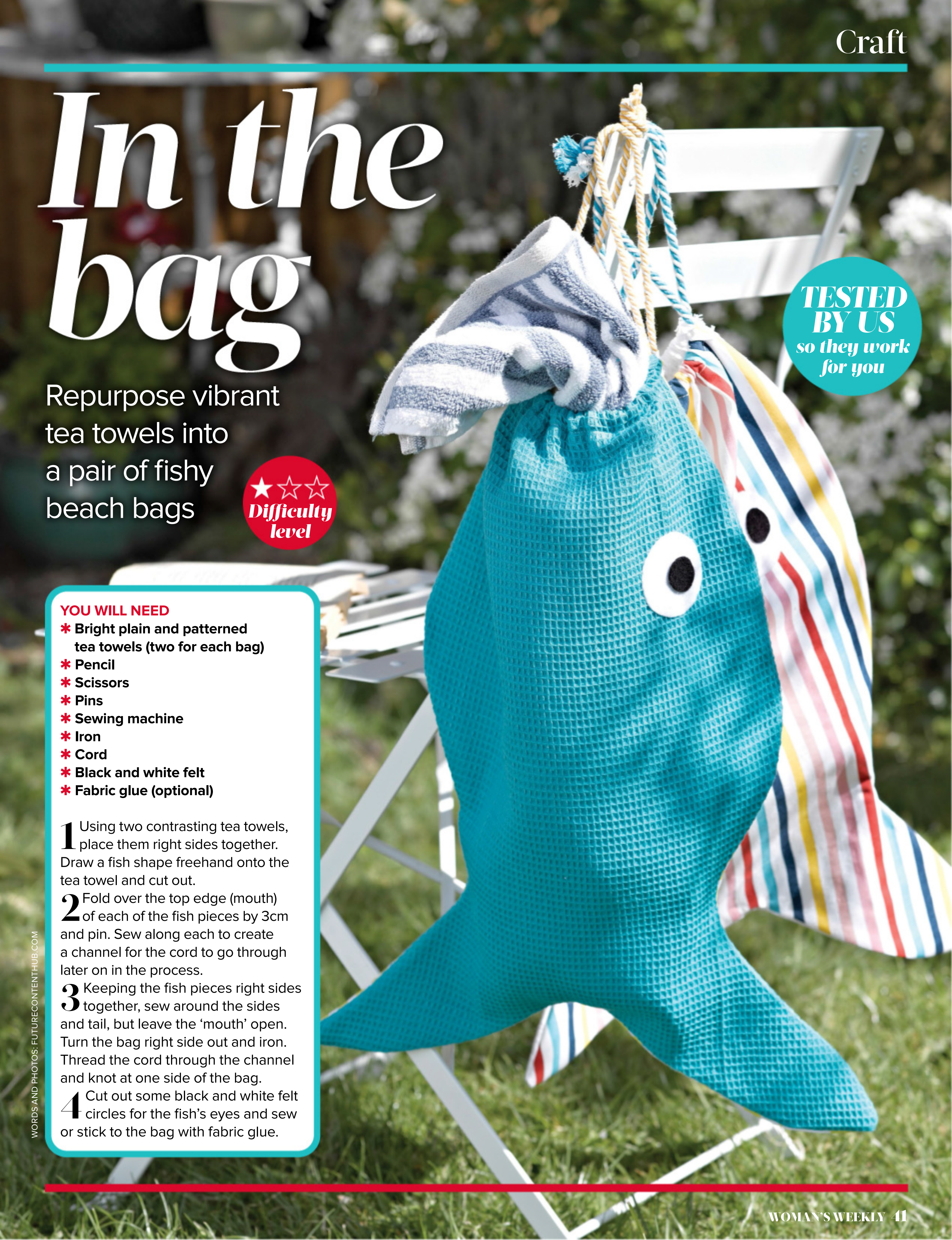
In the bag

Repurpose vibrant tea towels into a pair of fishy beach bags

★☆☆ Difficulty level

TESTED BY US *so they work for you*



YOU WILL NEED

- **Bright plain and patterned tea towels (two for each bag)**
- **Pencil**
- **Scissors**
- **Pins**
- **Sewing machine**
- **Iron**
- **Cord**
- **Black and white felt**
- **Fabric glue (optional)**

1 Using two contrasting tea towels, place them right sides together. Draw a fish shape freehand onto the tea towel and cut out.

2 Fold over the top edge (mouth) of each of the fish pieces by 3cm and pin. Sew along each to create a channel for the cord to go through later on in the process.

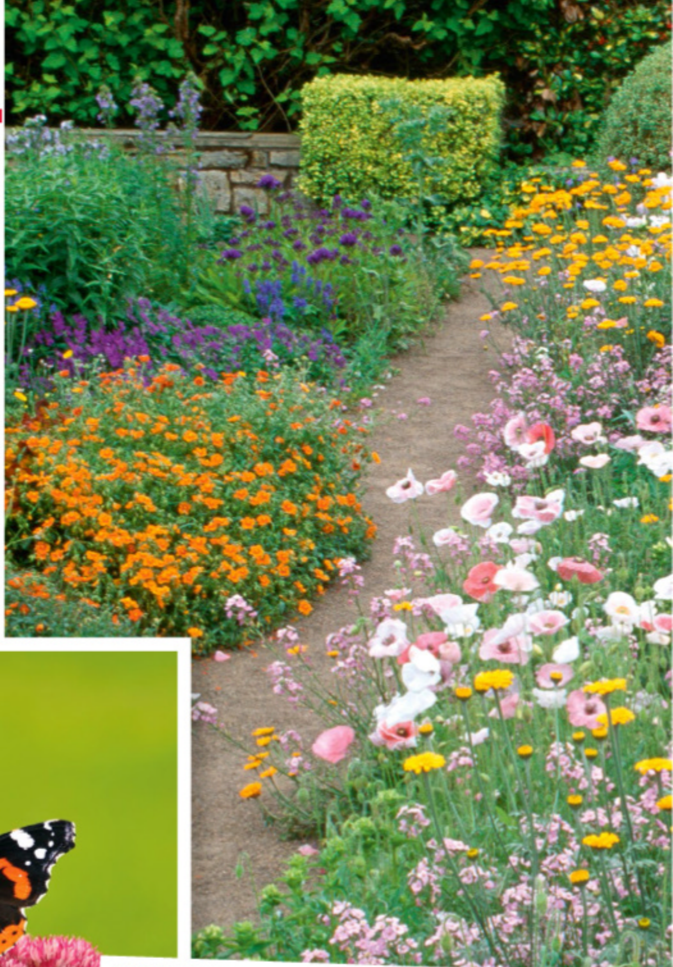
3 Keeping the fish pieces right sides together, sew around the sides and tail, but leave the 'mouth' open. Turn the bag right side out and iron. Thread the cord through the channel and knot at one side of the bag.

4 Cut out some black and white felt circles for the fish's eyes and sew or stick to the bag with fabric glue.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: FUTURECONTENTHUB.COM

STYLE counsel

Honing your design skills will bring finesse to your garden



Welcome in some wildlife

Opt for lavender

Find peace with an ordered style

Fitting features

Trying to pin down what makes your heart sing is a really useful exercise when thinking about your garden. For instance, do meandering pathways and dolly mixture plant shades make you smile, or is it clean lines and an orderly planting scheme that make you go ‘ahhh’? Being able to recognise what plants and design features fit your style means saving cash (no more buying plants that don’t look right) and, ultimately, having a space that reflects your personality and works for you.

Wildlife haven

This space is specially designed to provide food and shelter for native animals and insects. A pond is crucial, as are native trees, shrubs and flowering hedges, which offer nesting sites and food banks for birds. Features like bee hotels and hedgehog houses are ways to welcome in wildlife, while ‘untidy’ nooks, such as log piles and long grass, are sanctuaries for insects and small mammals.

*** Key plants: hawthorn, sedum, honeysuckle**

FORMAL FLAIR

The kind of gardens that are associated with stately homes, a formal design gives a peaceful, ordered feel and can work brilliantly in a small space. It’s characterised by ruler-straight lines, geometric shapes, symmetry and simple planting. A basic design might be a square lawn split by a central path, with mirror-image beds on either side. Add an eye-catching feature, such as a bird bath or terracotta urn, and restrict your plants to a palette of two or three colours. Use neat shrubs and evergreen hedges to give a strong framework and, for a classic flourish, topiary box balls or bay lollipops.

*** Key plants: lavender, hydrangea, geranium**

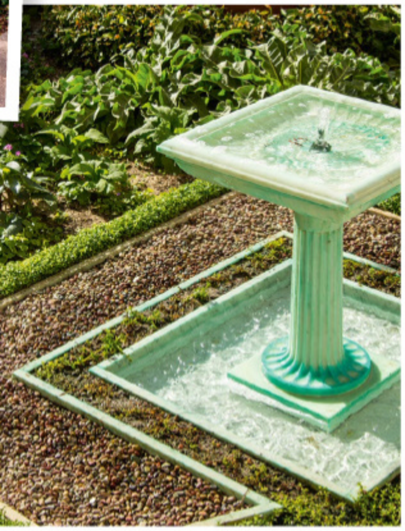
WORDS: CHRIS MORLEY. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY

Cottage gardens are more high-maintenance than you might think

COTTAGE CHARM

A cottage garden yells maximalist style, with colourful plants crammed together in an exuberant jumble. You might have good-looking vegetables and herbs rubbing shoulders with ornamentals – this garden is useful as well as beautiful. As plants are the stars, there's little room for a lawn, and straight lines are out too. Use natural materials, such as hazel hurdle fences and wooden seating, and upright supports like arches and wigwams for climbers to scramble over. While this style looks delightfully unkempt, in reality it's a high-maintenance option that's best suited to plantaholics.

* **Key plants: rose, hollyhock, philadelphus**



Contemporary edge

Like Scandi interiors, a contemporary garden is an elegant, uncluttered space that instantly relaxes the pulse. Start with a strong framework of hard landscaping, like slate paving or decking, horizontal slatted fences and clipped hedges. Keep a sense of calm with pared-back planting in quiet tones and a gentle water feature, like a reflective pool or bubble fountain. For a focal point, use a specimen tree, such as a multi-stemmed white birch.

* **Key plants: juneberry, allium, hosta**

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When the SUN RISES

As Arken headed to the great stone circle, she had no idea her fate would be sealed at dawn

Arken was beautiful. Dark brown irises floated on the unblemished whites of her eyes. She was lying on a bed of leaves and dried grass, covered by a handmade straw mat. A sheepskin cloak half covered her as she watched the glowing embers of a fire. Her tangled, long black hair felt soft beneath her cheek.

Their encampment was in a wide meadow between two forests. Normally, there were many other fires burning into the clear night sky, telling predators to hunt elsewhere for easier prey. The atmosphere tonight was tense and quiet because, without other families, safety in numbers was gone.

'Arken!' her father, Jard, spoke from the other side of the fire.

'Yes, father,' she replied.

'Sleep now,' he said. 'We rise at first sun and need to be ready.'

Arken looked at his grubby face, framed by wild brown hair. The flames illuminated his features in shades of yellow, and she could see he wasn't angry. He rarely was.

His lips were hidden by his bushy beard, but his smile was given away by softened green eyes. Arken felt loved.

'Mother?' she said. 'Will we wash in the river?'

'Yes, of course,' Nitsa replied, smiling through her own tangle of hair.

Arken stared at her parents. They looked unusually vulnerable in the ochre light. Jard leaned forward and said, 'In all your 16 summers, I have never seen you so restless as you are tonight, daughter.'

'Sorry, father, I miss Madjda.'

Her father smiled. 'Pretty girl, sleep now, tomorrow is a big day.'

However, falling asleep on demand was impossible for Arken. She watched the flames dance in front of her. A knot in a log exploded and orange sparks spiralled up into the infinite, starlit world. She pondered why the wondrous colours of daytime were washed away by a night-time palette of purples and blues. Beyond her parents, a line of trees marked the edge of the forest, with a black interior hiding many terrors.

Arken rolled onto her back and marvelled at the stars. They reminded her of Madjda's sparkling blue eyes. She sighed deeply and thought about how much she loved him.

'I have never seen you so restless'

Somewhere far away, a wolf stood on a high ridge, raised its head and howled into the abyss.

Jard stared into the darkness. They all knew what beast had made that sound, and they were on high alert, their hands resting on their spears. Night-time sounds were more threatening when your group was small and exposed.

Hunting for food was not just the privilege of humans. Every traveller had witnessed the bones and carnage of less fortunate nomads. For all the borderless beauty that surrounded them, danger still lurked everywhere. Daylight held much to fear, but the dark made terror a constant companion.

The wolf howled again but ventured no nearer, and in the ensuing silence, Arken succumbed to tiredness. Her sleep stole the voices of her parents chatting quietly, while a billion glittering stars moved unfettered up above.

* * * *

Every summer, the people from Arken's village followed the sun across the sky as they crossed the southern pastures of Neolithic Britain. Just as streams combined to create rivers, so the ancient people melded together. A groundswell of scattered communities slowly filtered in from around the country. All of them descending onto the great circle of stones.

This year, Arken's family travelled alone. It was three days ago that she had said goodbye to Madjda back at their village.

'I can't believe you won't be travelling with us,' she said. 'It breaks my heart.'

'I know, Arken – I feel sad too,' Madjda replied. 'But we'll be together again soon.'

Their last moments were interrupted by Madjda's father as he shouted, 'Come on, my boy!'

Madjda kissed Arken and walked off into the undergrowth. She watched until she knew there was no chance she would glimpse him again.

Would they really be reunited? The journey ahead held much beauty – deep gorges and mountain streams.

But rock falls, fast rivers and wild animals also made it perilous. Death was as common as friendship to Neolithic people, and mortality was often met with a keen sense of indifference.

* * * *

The following morning, Nitsa gently shook Arken from her sleep.

'Morning, mother,' Arken replied, sitting up and stretching.

The campfire was now a benign pile of grey ash sending up a wisp of smoke.

'We need to leave soon,' Nitsa said. 'Can you help me by gathering up our things?'

'Of course.' Then Arken looked around. 'Where has father gone?'

Her mother shook her head. 'Where do you think, silly? He's out looking for food.'

Arken nodded, then breathed in the clear summer air. All around was wondrous to her in the pale morning sunlight. Multitudes of iridescent butterflies flitted among the meadow's flowers in search of nectar. Uncountable insects buzzed and competed in their own miniature forests of tall grasses.

Looking up, she saw darting clouds of birds – free as the wind. Everywhere, she felt the beating heart of life in a pageant of colour and noise.

As Arken and Nitsa finished packing up their meagre belongings, a loud whistle came from across the meadow.

'For my lovely girls!' Jard's voice echoed as he held up a dead hare.

The animal was placed in a bag for later in the journey, and they set off, heading further west across the undulating grasslands.

Eventually, they came to a familiar river that meandered south towards the sea, and they drank the clear water, bathed and then dressed themselves in linen.

They rested in the hot sun on the far side of the river, while Nitsa busied herself by delicately lacing some wild flowers into Arken's raven-black hair.

A blindfold fell over her eyes

'You're still missing Madjda, aren't you?' she said idly, as if reading Arken's thoughts.

'It just feels so long since I've seen him,' Arken murmured.

Nitsa put her arms around her daughter. 'It was like that for me when I first met your father.'

Arken looked into her eyes. 'Do you still feel the same? After all these years...'

'Well, it's different now because I am with him all the time, and one day you will get married and you will feel less...' Nitsa broke off and shrugged as she was unsure of a word to use.

'You will feel less Arken?' asked Jard, who had sneaked up behind them.

Arken laughed, and it was like the sun coming out.

'Come, my girls,' Jard said. 'We need to go.'

* * * *

The afternoon was hot, and walking was hard going, but Arken gently teased her fingers across the tops of the tall grass as they walked. In the distance, a hill gently rose from the surrounding landscape. It was the final marker before they reached the circle of stones.

As they got nearer, a village elder appeared on the mound with a spear in one hand and an axe in the other.

'Father, look!' Arken cried and started up the hill.

'Daughter, come back here!' Jard shouted.

Arken didn't understand. Why was her father preventing her from going further? Reluctantly, she did as she was asked.

'Arken, stop!' he said as Jard put his belongings on the ground.

Arken glanced at her mother. Why was she crying?

Trembling, the young girl stared up at the village elder, his clothes flapping gently in the wind. Suddenly, a blindfold fell over her eyes and stole her sight.

'What's happening, Father? Why are you doing this?'

Arken began to shake with fear as Jard leaned forward and whispered, 'Don't worry, my beloved daughter. We are with you all the way.'

The elder spun around, faced the other side of the hill and signalled by raising his spear.

Jard led Arken up the hill with Nitsa following behind them. At the top, a warm breeze caressed Arken's face and the flowers in her hair fluttered.

Blind to what lay before her, Arken's other senses became as keen as flint. She heard the familiar noise of thousands of people gathered for the summer solstice. She could almost taste the cooking mixed in with the smell of campfire smoke, which hung heavy in the air.

Then she heard, or rather felt, someone approach her in the grass. They came and stood behind her.

'Arken, hold still now,' she heard her father say, then his fingers untied the blindfold.

Blinking, Arken gasped as she took in the wonderful scene that filled the land below her. She could see Stonehenge some way off. It was surrounded by a mass of people. Standing in two lines was everyone from her village, and the elder was at the far end of the human corridor.

'Arken, turn around,' her father said.

As she did so, she saw her parents smiling. But best of all, she saw the person who she heard come close to her.

'Madjda!' she cried out, throwing her arms around him. 'What's going on?'

Madjda's young, strong hands pushed her away slightly and he stared deep into her eyes.

'Today we are to be married,' he said. 'That's if you want to.'

'Yes, oh yes!' Arken squealed happily.

Then, as they held hands and walked between the smiling villagers, Stonehenge was bathed in gold by a beautiful sunset. The orange glow signified the end of another day, but when it next rose over the great stone circle with the next dawn, it would mark the birth of a new era for two young lovers.

The only things Arken had to mark this magical occasion were the flowers her mother had laced into her hair. But she didn't care, because love – like the setting and rising of the sun – was eternal.

THE END

David Clacy, 2023

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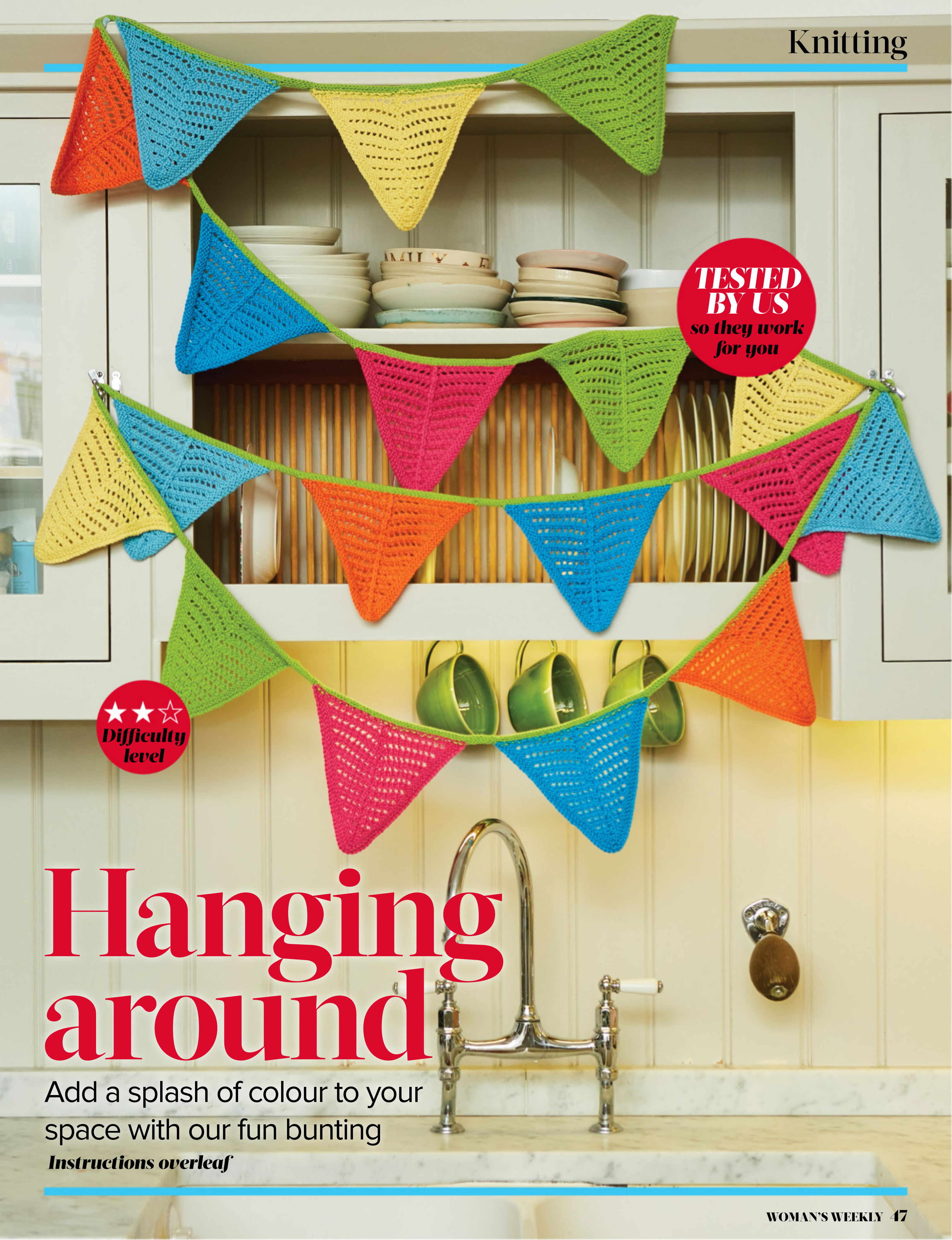

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Difficulty level

Hanging around

Add a splash of colour to your space with our fun bunting

Instructions overleaf

MEASUREMENTS

Approximately 4.15m/163½in long, measured from each end of ties; each flag measures 18cm/7in across top edge and 15cm/6in from point to top edge; the space between triangles measures 2.5cm/1in and ties at end measure 23cm/9in each.

MATERIALS

1 x 100g (210m) ball of King Cole Cottonsoft DK (100% cotton) in each of Pink (Hot Pink 1848), Blue (Azure 3366), Orange (Clementine 3464), Light Blue (Cloud 1575), Yellow (Buttercup 1600) and Green (Lime 1601)*. Pair each of 4mm (No. 8) and 3.25mm (No. 10) knitting needles and a 3.25mm (No. 10) circular knitting needle (length 80-100cm); cable needle. Yarn is available from theknittingnetwork.co.uk

TENSION

Tension is not critical, but as a guide, each flag measures 18cm/7in across top edge and 15cm/6in from point to top edge, using 4mm needles.

ABBREVIATIONS (UK TERMS)

K, knit; **k3tog,** knit 3 sts together thus: insert right needle into second then first st on left needle (as if work k2tog), slipping both sts off left needle, k1, then pass 2 slipped sts over; **p,** purl; **p3tog,** purl 3 sts together thus: place next st onto cable needle and leave at front of work, slip next 2 sts purlwise, place st on cable needle back onto left needle, then place 2 slipped sts back onto left needle, p all 3 sts tog; **skpo,** slip 1 st, k 1 st, pass slipped st over; **st(s),** stitch(es); **yf,** yarn forward (to make 1 st); **tog,** together (work as many sts together as stated).

NOTE

Yarn amounts are based on average requirements and are therefore approximate. Figures in square brackets are worked as stated after second bracket.

DESIGN: TINA EGLETON. PHOTOS: ANGELA SPAIN. STYLING: ANNE HARTNETT. * YARN SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

TRIANGLE (MAKE 3 IN EACH COLOUR)

With 4mm needles and chosen colour, cast on 81 sts. See abbreviations for k3tog and p3tog.

K 1 row.

1st row: Skpo, k37, k3tog, k37, k2tog – 77 sts.

K 1 row.

3rd row: Skpo, k35, k3tog, k35, k2tog – 73 sts. P 1 row.

5th row: Skpo, [k1, yf, skpo] 11 times, k3tog, [k2tog, yf, k1] 11 times, k2tog – 69 sts.

6th row: P33, p3tog, p33 – 67 sts.

7th row: Skpo, [k1, yf, skpo] 10 times, k3tog, [k2tog, yf, k1] 10 times, k2tog – 63 sts.

8th row: P30, p3tog, p30 – 61 sts.

9th row: Skpo, [k1, yf, skpo] 9 times, k3tog, [k2tog, yf, k1] 9 times, k2tog – 57 sts.

10th row: P27, p3tog, p27 – 55 sts.

Last 2 rows set the position of central decreases, and lace pattern between edges.

Continue in this way, working 1 less pattern repeat on each side of central decrease, until the following row has been worked: Skpo, [k1, yf, skpo] 3 times, k3tog, [k2tog, yf, k1] 3 times, k2tog – 21 sts.

Next row: P9, p3tog, p1, turn and leave remaining sts unworked.

Next row: K3tog, turn and leave remaining sts unworked.

Next row: Slip 1, p1, turn and leave remaining sts unworked.

Repeat last 2 rows until all sts are worked off.

Fasten off.

MAKING UP

Arrange triangles in desired order then chose colour to be used for top edging. With right side facing, and with 3.25mm circular needle and edging colour, pick up and k47 sts along top edge of first triangle, break off yarn and leave these sts on needle, *with right side facing using same needle and colour, pick up and k47 sts along row end edge of next triangle, break off yarn; repeat from * until all triangles are on needle.

TOP EDGING

With 3.25mm needles and chosen edging colour, cast on 5 sts.

Next row: *K5, turn and slip these 5 sts back onto left-hand needle, turn, bring yarn tightly across back of work to beginning, repeat from * 59 times more.

Attach triangles on circular needle to cord as follows:

**** Next row:** K3, slip 1 st, work first st of triangle tog with last st of cord, pass slipped st over, turn, slip 4, turn, bring yarn tightly across back of work to beginning.

Next row: * K3, skpo (using next st on triangle), turn and slip these 4 sts back onto left needle, turn, bring yarn tightly across back of work to beginning; repeat from * 45 times more.

Next row: K4, turn, pick up 1 st from back of triangle, slip these 5 sts back onto left hand needle, turn, bring yarn tightly across back of work to beginning.

Next row: *K5, turn and slip these 5 sts back onto left hand needle, turn, bring yarn tightly across back of work to beginning; repeat from * 6 times more. **

Repeat from ** to ** to attach all triangles to cord.

Next row: *K5, turn and slip these 5 sts back onto left needle, turn, bring yarn tightly across back of work to beginning, repeat from * 52 times more.

Cast off and weave in all ends.

*** If you have any knitting and crochet questions, please contact Knitting Editor Lynne at lynne.rowe@futurenet.com**

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Cradle her in different ways for four unique sounds!

On her tummy she coos

Held face-to-face she giggles

Against your shoulder she fusses then calms

TOUCH ACTIVATED

Measures 18 inches (45.7 cm) in length. This doll is not a toy, but a fine collectable for adult collectors. Not intended for children under 14.

There's nothing like the joy that comes as you hold a little one in your arms or against your shoulder, and she coos contentedly back at you. The bond you feel is so loving and so deep, you know it will last forever. And now there is a first-of-its-kind lifelike baby doll that lets you recreate this tender experience any time you like!

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SERIAL PART 1

Seas of CHANGE

Charlotte was excited by her new job – but she began to wonder who she could trust

The window of Charlotte's room at the guest house overlooked the sea, and she had become transfixed by the sight of the waves frothing against the strip of beach below.

Despite it being June, the sky and sea were both a stormy grey-blue, so it was hard to distinguish where one ended and the other began.

For a moment, Charlotte's mood matched the gloomy colour scheme. She suddenly missed her flat in London and wondered how she would cope with staying in a small seaside town in Norfolk for at least three weeks.

Her heart was bruised and battered

It wasn't the first time she'd been away from home on business. She enjoyed her jaunts around the country sourcing antiques and artworks for private houses and businesses. Only, this time, she had the added weight of dealing with the recent break-up from her long-term boyfriend, Sam. The end of the relationship had been inevitable. They'd been growing apart for months, maybe years. Even so, her heart was bruised and battered.

Taking a deep breath, she moved away from the window. She had a job to do, a new client to impress. Jack Lowman was an ex-City trader who was pumping his savings into a run-down hotel at the edge of town.

Jack had discovered Charlotte via her website, which had finally been completed a few months earlier. She had learnt, during her initial meeting with him at the hotel, that he had left the stress of the City behind when he inherited the business from his parents. Now he was focusing on relaunching the place.

Charlotte had found Jack friendly enough, but there was a detached coldness about him. The only time he had smiled broadly during their meeting was when his daughter, Sophia, had run up to him as he was walking Charlotte to her car.

At the sight of the cute six-year-old, his face had lit up and he'd scooped her into his arms, kissing the top of her head several times.

The heart-warming exchange between father and daughter had reassured her that Jack wasn't such a cold fish, after all.

A woman, a little younger than Charlotte, was walking briskly up the driveway behind Sophia. From the formal way Jack spoke to her, she obviously wasn't Sophia's mother – a childminder or nanny, maybe.

Now, glancing at the clock next to the bed, Charlotte gasped. It was 8.30am. She was due at the hotel in half an hour and she wasn't even dressed yet.

****

By the time Charlotte reached the hotel, pulling up outside in her very unglamorous hatchback, she was feeling hot and bothered.

'You're only 28!' she scolded herself. 'You can't be that unfit that getting dressed in a hurry brings you out in a sweat.'

As she rushed across the gravelled parking area, she took in the sight of The Seaview Hotel. It was a grand old house, built in the 1920s, she guessed, with an expanse of mock-Tudor white paintwork and wooden beams stretching across the facade. It had three stories, with towering brick chimneys casting shadows across the driveway.

Hurrying up to the main entrance, she made her way across the reception area to the offices where she had met Jack a few days earlier.

Several men were busy painting the walls of the lobby a subtle shade of salmon pink, and from above she heard the noise of sawing and drilling. The Seaview was being transformed from a slightly sad, run-down ghost into a destination hotel.

For a brief moment, the smell of fresh paint transported Charlotte back to when she and Sam were decorating her London flat. She pushed away the pang of sadness and continued towards a door next to the reception desk.

To get to Jack's office, she had to pass by his PA, a slightly terrifying woman called Becky Lemar. Becky was sitting behind her desk as Charlotte bustled in.

'Hello,' Charlotte panted. 'I have a meeting with Jack at 9am.'

Becky looked pointedly at her watch. Charlotte squirmed, knowing she was at least five minutes late.

'He's on a call now.' Becky finally made eye contact, her piercing gaze pinning Charlotte to the spot. She was like the school bully grown up into a strikingly attractive thirtysomething. In her presence, Charlotte felt like the geeky kid she once was. The girl who liked antiques

and going to art galleries more than boys and music.

'Take a seat,' instructed Becky, nodding towards a hard-backed chair. 'Mr Lowman will let you know when he's free.'

'Thank you.' Charlotte obediently sat down, arms folded neatly in her lap.

'Coffee?'

'Sorry?' Charlotte looked up to see Becky was now standing.

'Would you like a coffee? I just made a pot.'

'Oh,' Charlotte was taken aback by Becky's display of friendliness. 'Yes, please.'

'I like your hair,' said Becky as she handed Charlotte a steaming mug. 'Do you dye it yourself or go to a salon?'

Instinctively, Charlotte patted her head. Her hair was a startling shade of red. It was a look she maintained because she felt it gave her an edge. She was happy being the woman who loved antiques and art, but she also wanted to show she was still young – and maybe even a little wild – when the mood took her.

'Thank you,' she replied. 'I go to a salon every few weeks.'

'Really? Becky sounded surprised. 'I used to play with my hair colour when I was a kid. I was red for a week or two, but I grew out of it.'

Charlotte tried to convince herself she had imagined the sting in Becky's words. 'Thanks for the coffee.'

Becky smiled sweetly and returned to her desk.

After what seemed like an hour, but was actually just a few minutes, Jack's office door opened and he peered out. 'You're here, good! Right, are you ready for the grand tour?'

Charlotte leapt to her feet, almost spilling her coffee. 'Yes!'

Jack nodded at the mug. 'Bring your coffee with you. Just don't slop any on the carpets on the third floor. They were only fitted last week. You can spill what you like on any of the other floors, those carpets are about 50 years old.'

He turned to Becky. 'I'm going to take Charlotte for lunch after I've shown her around. Sophia is out with her childminder. I'll be back by the time they get home, so she won't come bothering you.'

'No problem,' said Becky crisply.

> 'There's one place I don't want any art sourced from'

* * * *

'So, what do you think of the place?' Jack sat across the rickety table from Charlotte, placing a glass of soda and lime in front of her and sitting down.

'It's going to be beautiful.' Charlotte took a small sip of her drink and glanced around the quaint pub, with its assortment of odd tables and chairs. She liked the fact that nothing matched. It gave the place character.

'The third floor is almost there, apart from adding your finishing touches.'

'Yes, I love the minimalist look of the rooms. A couple of well-placed antique pieces in each will just give it that something special that other hotels don't offer.'

'Exactly,' Jack said. 'I don't want my hotel to feel like some corporate chain. I want it to be a home from home. No... better than that. I want each room to be the bedroom guests wish they had at home. Each room should offer something a little different. Well, you know all this from our first meeting.'

'Yes, and I can't wait to get out and about finding pieces. And I love that you want to source everything from local businesses. It's great when enterprises support each other like that.'

'It's good to give back where you can,' said Jack.

'I can already picture what I want in some of the rooms,' continued Charlotte. 'I've found some beautiful side tables and a writing desk online. I'm visiting the shops tomorrow. I can show you the online listings.'

Jack nodded. 'And if you find anything else you think is right and you can't get hold of me, buy it rather than miss out on something special.'

Charlotte felt a rush of pride that Jack already had so much trust in her.

'This afternoon, I thought I'd have a proper look around the town,' she said. 'Maybe pop into some galleries. I noticed a couple as I drove through the other day.'

Jack cleared his throat. 'There's one place in the town I don't want any art sourced

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

from. It's called the Shimmering Shore Gallery. If you could give that one a wide berth, I'd appreciate it.'

Charlotte was suddenly intrigued. She wanted to ask why this particular gallery was to be avoided, but she resisted prying.

'Where's Sophia today?' she asked to fill the silence.

Jack smiled at the mention of his daughter's name. 'No doubt giving her childminder the runaround. Her mother, my ex-wife, is currently abroad for work, so Sophia is staying with me for a few weeks. She should be at school in Norwich, but they found asbestos in the gym. I feel bad not seeing her during the day but I make up for it in the evening. Tonight is movie-and-ice-cream night. She gets to choose the film, so it will no doubt involve princesses or boy wizards.'

Charlotte laughed. It was hard to imagine ever-so-serious Jack watching something so frivolous.

'How is the B&B?' he asked. 'Becky said it was the nicest one with a view of the sea.'

Charlotte thought she'd disguised her negative feelings at the mention of Becky's name, but Jack obviously spotted something in her expression.

'Becky can be a bit... intimidating, can't she?'

'I...' Charlotte floundered for a response.

'She scared me at first, but there's a soft centre under that hard shell. She's been a good friend as well as an excellent PA. She's been a great help organising our first local food-and-wine event.'

'Oh, what's that?'

'A weekend where we invite local producers to come and set up stands in the hotel grounds, offering tastings and discounts on any purchases. Plus all the menus for the weekend will be created using locally produced products. I'm going to start promoting it soon, get some bookings in before the hotel is even ready. I want to have at least one room finished so I can use it in any publicity, along with some arty shots of the outside of the hotel and the grounds.'

'That sounds like a great idea,' Charlotte enthused. 'You could make it seasonal.'

'That's the plan, if the first one gets the guests coming.'

****

Jack was about to say more, but he suddenly froze, staring at something, or someone, over Charlotte's shoulder.

'Jack!' boomed a deep male voice, causing Charlotte to flinch.

A large man with a grin as wide as a shark's suddenly loomed over the table. Jack visibly cringed.

'How are you, old boy?' The man continued to talk loud enough for everyone in the pub to hear.

Jack folded his arms. 'Fine thanks.'

Charlotte stared up into the man's wide, flushed face. His fair hair was artfully brushed to disguise that it was thinning. He was probably in his late 50s, but clearly trying to look 40, dressed in a loud pink and orange shirt, and a pair of skinny jeans that seemed to have melted around his robust legs.

‘He's someone I'd advise you to avoid like the plague'

Grinning once again, he met her gaze. 'Hello, pretty lady. I'm Harry... Harry Slovesome.'

Pretty lady! Charlotte shuddered as she stumbled over her response.

'How charming,' said Harry.

'We're actually in the middle of a meeting,' said Jack.

'No problem, old boy, just wanted to say hello. Everything going well with the refurb, is it?'

Jack nodded. 'Yes, thank you.'

'Jolly good. Looking forward to seeing the finished result.'

Jack didn't reply. Charlotte sank a little lower in her chair as Harry lingered for another few seconds, seemingly unaffected by the tense atmosphere.

Finally, Harry took a step away from the table. 'Well, enjoy your lunch.'

Charlotte watched him walk towards the bar. He took surprisingly small steps for somebody so large.

'Who was that?' she hissed.

Jack took a swig of his drink. 'Someone I'd advise you to avoid like the plague. As he so charmingly introduced himself, his name is Harry Slovesome. He owns three hotels in Norfolk, one just up the road. He tried to buy The Seaview from my parents on countless occasions.'

Jack took a long gulp of his drink, obviously still rattled. 'Even when my mother was ill a few years ago, he took the opportunity to approach my father, trying to convince him the cash would come in handy for my mother's care.'

A young woman appeared by their table carrying two plates of delicious-smelling fish and chips.

'Anyway, let's eat,' said Jack. 'Assuming Harry hasn't caused you to lose your appetite.'

****

Charlotte was beginning to wonder if an evening walk had been a good idea. She'd driven a mile or so out of town to a more secluded stretch of coast. The sand appeared to shimmer above the ground as the blustering wind blew salt spray against the side of her face.

'What happened to summer?' she wondered.

She turned her back to the sea and clambered up a slight incline of dunes and long grasses to a narrow road. She'd head to the car, then drive back to the B&B and get an early night.

Up ahead, she saw the lights of a pub and heard the gentle buzz of conversation.

As she drew closer and smelt the wholesome aroma of cooking drifting from an open window, she considered popping in and ordering some comfort food to eat in a quiet corner.

She stopped a little way from the pub entrance, trying to decide whether to go in.

As she hesitated, the door opened and a couple walked arm in arm between the benches of the small beer garden.

'Oh, Harry!' laughed the woman. 'You are such an oaf sometimes!'

Charlotte's jaw dropped. She had heard the woman's voice before, and now she recognised her blonde hair and erect poise. It was Becky – and the man she was affectionately chastising and linking arms with was none other than Harry Slovesome.

Charlotte ducked out of the light from the pub as the pair crossed the road and climbed into a waiting taxi. As it pulled away, she felt a wave of confusion and suspicion... What was Becky doing with Jack's main business rival? And should she tell Jack what she'd seen?

TO BE CONTINUED

Matthew Batham, 2023

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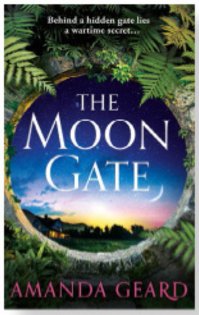
Great reads

Zoe West shares her favourite picks for the week

The Moon Gate



by Amanda Geard
(£20, HB, Headline)

1939: Grace leaves for Tasmania, where she falls for her Irish neighbour Daniel – until he is called away by war. 1975: Artist Willow and her husband Ben are thrilled to be left a home on the Tasmanian coast, but their lives change forever when they delve into its history. 2004: A faded photograph leads Libby to discover the shocking truth about her father Ben's death. Sweeping across three generations, this tale of family secrets is utterly unputdownable.

The Guest House by the Sea

Woman's Weekly LOVES

by Faith Hogan
(£20, HB, Head of Zeus)

The warmth, friendship and Irish sea air of the guest house might just change your life forever... Esme's health may be declining, but she remains full of wisdom. Rather than running her guest house in Ballycove, this summer she's confined to a chair in the entry hall after a nasty fall. From there, she's perfectly positioned to learn about the guests and their lives. There's the city professional grappling with a huge decision, the grandmother worried about her family, and a woman whose husband is mysteriously absent. Can Esme guide them towards a fresh start? A life-affirming read.

Faith Hogan
THE GUEST HOUSE BY THE SEA

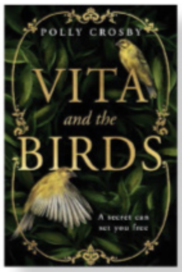
In The Summertime

Maeve Haran
In The Summertime
Old friends, new love and a long, hot summer they'll never forget

by Maeve Haran
(£8.99, PB, Pan Macmillan)

From the author of *Having it All* comes this perfect summer read; old friends reconnecting, new love and a mystery to be solved. Georgina Greenhills' marriage is falling apart, and when her holiday is cancelled, she returns to the small Devon seaside town where she grew up. But she must solve the mystery of why valuable antiques are disappearing from the local manor house. Gathering old friends to help her, and bumping into Daniel, an old dancing partner she once knew, this summer is about to get very interesting. A delightful novel.

Vita and the Birds



Polly Crosby
(£16.99, HB, Harper Collins)

It's 1938 and Lady Vita Goldsborough is trapped on the East Anglian coast by her controlling brother Aubrey. Comforting herself by watching the birds flying free above her, she befriends a local artist, Dodie, with whom she forms a close bond and plans her escape. In 1997, grieving Eve returns to the coast to reminisce over fond memories of summers spent with her grandmother, Dodie. She uncovers a bundle of letters and what follows is a beautifully written, haunting story of love and tragedy.

Drowning

DROWNING
T.J. NEWMAN

by TJ Newman
(£16.99, HB, Simon & Schuster)

Buckle up because this edge-of-the-seat thriller won't let you go, not until you know the outcome, anyway. When a plane explodes just minutes after take-off, it crashes into the Pacific Ocean. Those on-board who are still alive must close the doors to save themselves. But when the plane sinks, the terrified passengers know they only have a certain amount of time to survive. Cue rescue teams, complex plans, and a nail-biting and emotional race against the clock. Breathtaking stuff.

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VITA AND THE BIRDS REVIEW: SUKHY COOKE

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and let us know what you're reading – we love to hear your recommendations. Email zoe.west@futurenet.com or drop us a tweet @zoeannewest

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Puzzle TIME

Wordwise

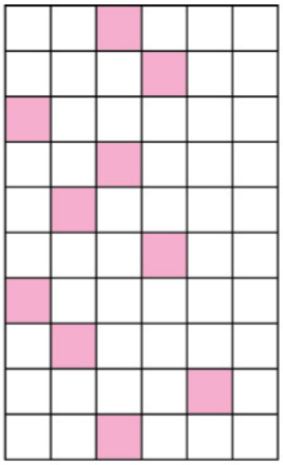
You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the central square. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words are allowed. There is one nine-letter word in the grid, for which the clue is: **Mental condition**

S	H	Y
S	O	P
I	C	S

Average = 6
More than 12 = well done

LINKWORDS

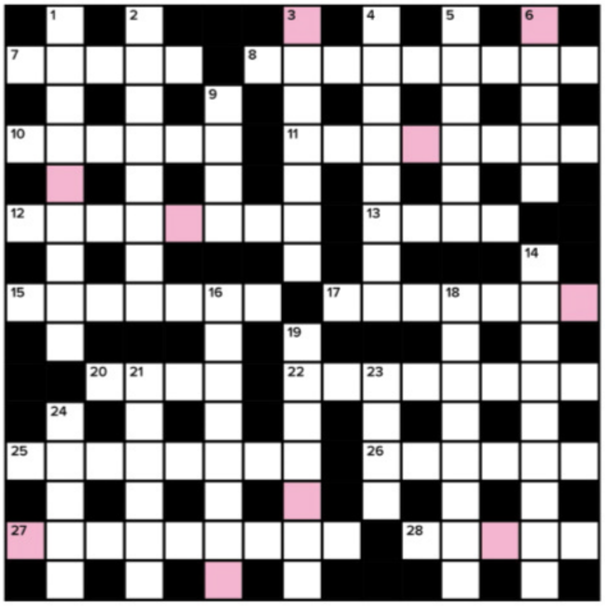
Fit 10 words into the grid so that each links with the end of the word on its left and the beginning of the one on the right. Then unscramble the letters in the shaded squares to make a word. **CLUE: Goods that have been illegally imported or exported.**



BEYOND	**BEING**
BUTTER	**STEAMER**
ODD	**UP**
WATCH	**ROLL**
HAPPY	**GIRL**
STAIR	**BEAN**
SHOPPING	**WEAVE**
SILVER	**SIGN**
FIND	**CONSCIENCE**
HIT	**CREAM**

Crossword

Try the easy or cryptic clues, then rearrange the letters in the shaded squares for the answer. CLUE: Sum of £1,000? Add a 50 (5,5)



EASY CLUES

Across

7 Car, informally (5)
8 Fungi (9)
10 Matters (6)
11 Benevolence (8)
12 Altogether (8)
13 Freezes (4)
15 Root vegetables (7)
17 Opposed (7)
20 Always (4)
22 Recuperation (8)
25 Small stirrer (8)
26 Not present (6)
27 Gear (9)
28 Additional payment (5)
16 One's own (8)
18 Incursion (8)
19 Mention (5,2)
21 Related to sight (6)
23 Casual talk (4)
24 Pace in music (5)

Down

1 Noxious (9)
2 Result (8)
3 Large fowl (7)
4 Musing (8)
5 Spring up (6)
6 Awry (5)
9 Land surrounded by water (4)
14 Space traveller (9)

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

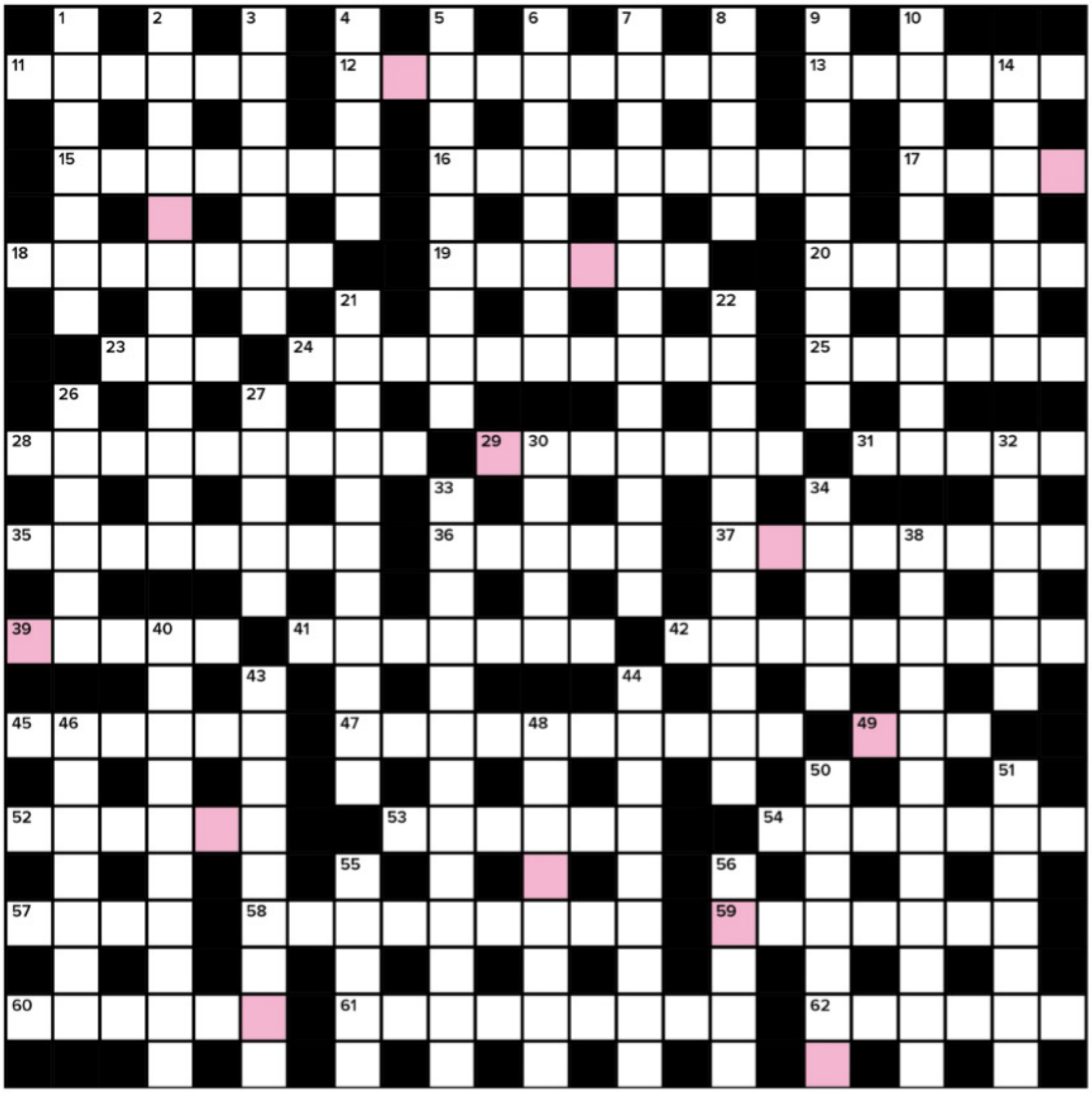
7 Test for vehicle, or part of one? (5)
8 Mum's ringing Esther to go regularly for edible plants (9)
10 Sends out pieces of paper, forgetting header (6)
11 King has extravagant dinner cut short on *SS Grace* (8)
12 Tyre in limousine, extremely broken? Completely (8)
13 One son around church decorates a cake (4)
15 Vegetables turn on spit, mostly revolving (7)
17 Once more, street's not in favour (7)
20 Piece from Steve Reich delivers at any point (4)
22 Cry over event to begin complex healing process (8)
25 A pot's stirred with one, perhaps? (8)
26 Starts to abhor being sent away (6)
27 Lively para sat up to get equipment (9)
28 Perk of public transport's getting on (5)

Down

1 Toxic soup I soon drunk (9)
2 Lou's translated question's second half to get answer (8)
3 Large birds from country bordering Spain's capital (7)
4 Contemplating object to entertain family (8)
5 Jump on top of boxing lightweight (6)
6 In the morning, is eating starter of supper odd? (5)
9 Man, perhaps, I will broadcast (4)
14 Foremost of adventurers flying to Saturn? (9)
16 For every child, a novel's ending is distinctive (8)
18 Raid so in vain, tragically (8)
19 Refer to rear (5,2)
21 Vial filled with soft unguents, primarily for the eyes (6)
23 Tom say, around hotel, making conversation (4)
24 Stop metronome holding back musical speed (5)

Jumbo puzzle

Read down the letters in the shaded squares to spell out **a type of houseplant (7,6)**



ACROSS

11 Find (6)
12 Sorts (9)
13 Caught a fish (6)
15 Find refuge (7)
16 Therapy (9)
17 Ride waves (4)
18 Less complex (7)
19 Considerate (6)
20 Not so difficult (6)
23 Sick (3)
24 Garden structure (10)
25 Is alive (6)
28 Section of writing (9)
29 Collides (7)
31 Web-footed birds (5)
35 Corridors (8)
36 Delete (5)
37 Outdoor meal (8)
39 Boldness (5)
41 Bands (7)
42 Convey (9)
45 Shining (6)
47 Surgical procedures (10)
49 Vehicle (3)
52 Female relative (6)
53 Data charts (6)
54 Journeys (7)
57 Suggest indirectly (4)
58 Latent promise (9)
59 Trucks (7)
60 Develop into (6)
61 Flat (9)
62 Soldier on watch (6)

DOWN

1 Religious devotion (7)
2 Butterfly larvae (12)
3 Kitchen appliances (7)
4 Each (5)
5 Defended (9)
6 Investigate (8)
7 Noble (13)
8 Burnt remains (5)
9 Exhausted (9)
10 Jealous (10)
14 Serious in mind (7)
21 Part of grammar (11)
22 Calling to mind (11)
26 Royal residence (6)
27 Medications (5)
30 Depart (5)
32 Small jet of liquid (6)
33 European sea (13)
34 Torso (5)
38 Definitions (12)
40 Undergrowth (10)
43 Tried (9)
44 Melts in liquid (9)
46 Day-to-day (7)
48 Hires (8)
50 Holidaymaker (7)
51 Pudding (7)
55 Water vapour (5)
56 Narrow incisions (5)

*** Find the puzzle answers on the horoscopes page.**

YOU CAN WORK IT OUT...

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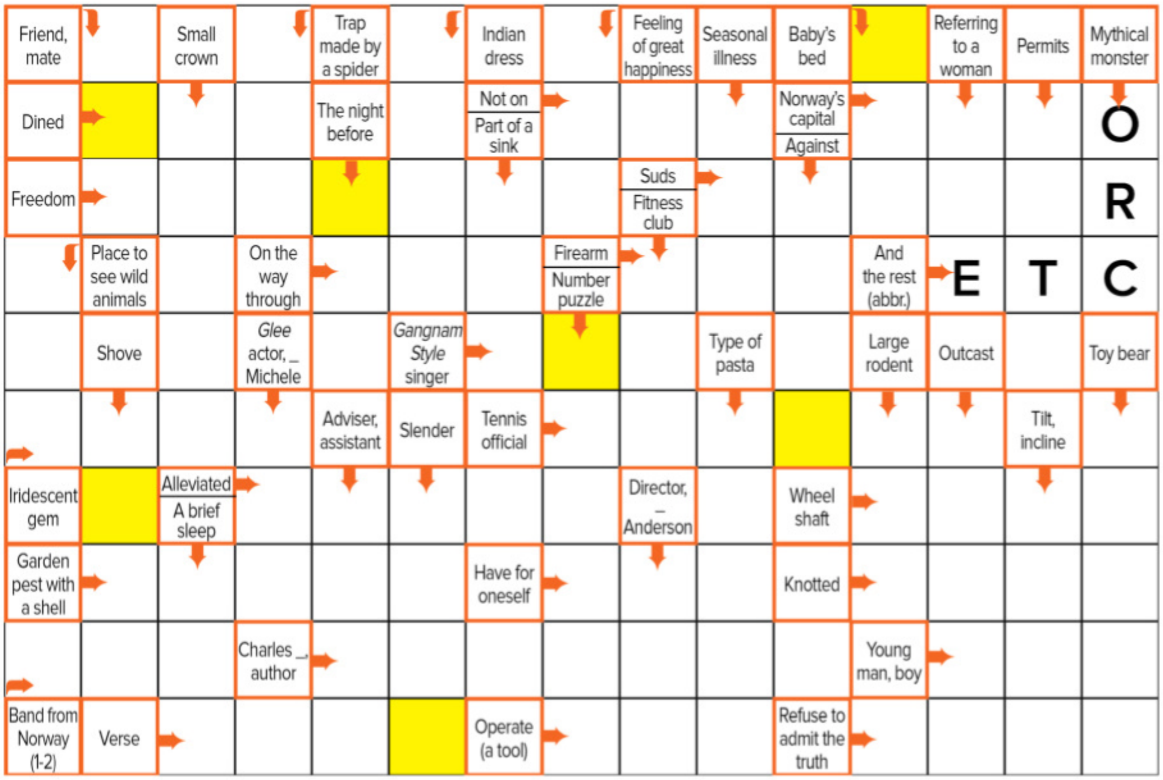
Puzzle TIME

Arrow word

Of all the naturally occurring elements of the periodic table that are solid at room temperature, which is the softest? Solve the puzzle by following the arrows and writing in your answers. Then read down the letters in the shaded squares to find the answer.


Friend, mate
Small crown
Trap made by a spider
Indian dress
Feeling of great happiness
Seasonal illness
Baby's bed
Referring to a woman
Permits
Mythical monster
Dined
The night before
Not on
Part of a sink
Norway's capital
Against
O
Freedom
Suds
Fitness club
R
Place to see wild animals
On the way through
Firearm
Number puzzle
And the rest (abbr.)
E
T
C
Shove
Glee actor, _ Michele
Gangnam Style singer
Type of pasta
Large rodent
Outcast
Toy bear
Adviser, assistant
Slender
Tennis official
Tilt, incline
Iridescent gem
Alleviated
A brief sleep
Director, _ Anderson
Wheel shaft
Garden pest with a shell
Have for oneself
Knotted
Charles _ author
Young man, boy
Band from Norway (1-2)
Verse
Operate (a tool)
Refuse to admit the truth

YOUR ANSWER:

WORDSEARCH

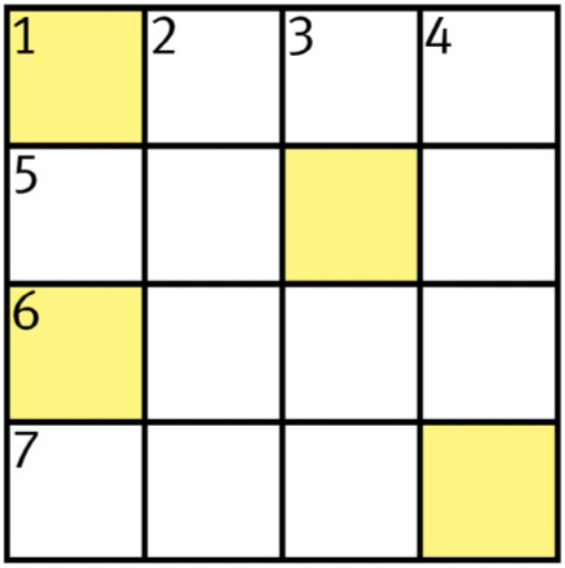
Janet Cooke is, to date, the only person to have returned which award? The answer is the one missing from the grid.

M	B	X	P	U	S	K	A	S
N	O	B	E	L	Z	T	T	T
O	O	B	S	U	F	U	I	I
R	K	L	O	A	R	R	G	R
W	E	S	B	A	B	N	R	L
E	R	M	C	T	Y	E	A	I
L	Q	S	M	A	O	R	M	N
L	O	J	K	Y	E	N	M	G
M	E	R	C	U	R	Y	Y	Y

YOUR ANSWER:

BAFTA
BOOKER
BRIT
EMMY
GRAMMY
MERCURY
MOBO
NOBEL
ORWELL
OSCAR
PULITZER
PUSKAS
STIRLING
TONY
TURNER

Mini crossword



The shaded boxes spell out a word.

ACROSS
1 Seedcases (4)
5 Revise (4)
6 Tithe (4)
7 Elm, say (4)

DOWN
1 Hurl missiles at (4)
2 European river (4)
3 Plunge headfirst into water (4)
4 Eyelid swelling (4)

Your stars

For 14-20 June with Bracha Goldsmith

yourastrologysigns.com

ARIES 21 MAR – 20 APR
Timing is everything. Listen carefully to your intuitive voice deep inside. It will guide you in the right direction.

TAURUS 21 APR – 21 MAY
Finding time to be in seclusion and silence will be of great value to you this week. Even 10 minutes a day will help.

GEMINI 22 MAY – 21 JUN
Your social circle could be changing; you may focus more on forming new relationships and friendships at this time.

CANCER 22 JUN – 23 JUL
Remaining calm and peaceful no matter what is your challenge this week. Don't forget to breathe and relax!

LEO 24 JUL – 23 AUG
Creatively, this can be a very productive time for you. Focus only on whatever gives you pleasure and joy, and whole new vistas will appear.

VIRGO 24 AUG – 23 SEP
This is a good time to bring more balance into your life. It is not a time of extremes, but rather of finding your natural pace and rhythm.

LIBRA 24 SEP – 23 OCT
It's time to do things your way! You'd like everyone's approval, but it's time to set that aside and forge a new path for yourself, regardless of others' opinions.

SCORPIO 24 OCT – 22 NOV
New doors are opening. This may also mean that other doors are closing. Don't look back. New opportunities are all around you if you will only look!

SAGITTARIUS 23 NOV – 21 DEC
Your career may be changing direction. Most important is to have meaning in whatever you do. Remember to be yourself.

CAPRICORN 22 DEC – 20 JAN
Knowing who to trust may be a challenge this week. Take care before getting involved in any joint projects or partnerships.

AQUARIUS 21 JAN – 19 FEB
You're growing, evolving and blossoming. Even though there may be growing pains, it will all be worth it in the end.

PISCES 20 FEB – 20 MAR
Financially you may be making some changes and adjustments. Think carefully about your needs and wants.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

JUMBO PUZZLE ACROSS: 11 Locate **12** Varieties **13** Hooked **15** Shelter **16** Treatment **17** Surf **18** Simpler **19** Caring **20** Easier **23** Ill **24** Greenhouse **25** Exists **28** Paragraph **29** Clashes **31** Geese **35** Passages **36** Erase **37** Barbecue **39** Nerve **41** Stripes **42** Transport **45** Bright **47** Operations **49** Van **52** Auntie **53** Graphs **54** Voyages **57** Hint **58** Potential **59** Lorries **60** Become **61** Apartment **62** Sentry.
DOWN: 1 Worship **2** Caterpillars **3** Kettles **4** Every **5** Protected **6** Research **7** Distinguished **8** Ashes **9** Shattered **10** Possessive **14** Earnest **21** Preposition **22** Remembering **26** Palace **27** Drugs **30** Leave **32** Squirt **33** Mediterranean **34** Trunk **38** Explanations **40** Vegetation **43** Attempted **44** Dissolves **46** Routine **48** Appoints **50** Tourist **51** Dessert **55** Steam **56** Slits.
Answer: AFRICAN VIOLET

CROSSWORD ACROSS: 7 Motor **8** Mushrooms **10** Issues **11** Kindness **12** Entirely **13** Ices **15** Turnips **17** Against **20** Ever **22** Recovery **25** Teaspoon **26** Absent **27** Apparatus **28** Bonus.
DOWN: 1 Poisonous **2** Solution **3** Turkeys **4** Thinking **5** Bounce **6** Amiss **9** Isle **14** Astronaut **16** Personal **18** Invasion **19** Bring up **21** Visual **23** Chat **24** Tempo.
Answer: GRAND TOTAL

LINKWORDS REASON, PADDLE, COUPLE, SPRING, VALLEY, RUNNER, BASKET, DOLLAR, GUILTY, SINGLE **Answer:** CONTRABAND

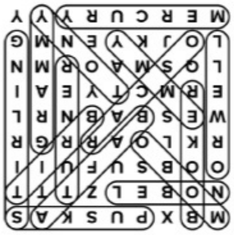
WORDWISE chop, chops, cops, copy, cosh, cosy, hops, hypo, hyssop, physio, posh, posy, psycho, shop, shops, sops. **Answer:** PSYCHOSIS

MINI XWORD

P	O	D	S
E	D	I	T
L	E	V	Y
T	R	E	E

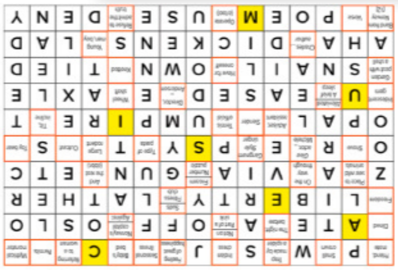
Answer: PILE

WORDSEARCH



Answer: PULITZER

ARROW WORD **Answer:** CAESIUM



IN YOUR NEXT ISSUE

LOSE UP TO A STONE BY WALKING!

SUMMER SCENTS YOU'LL LOVE

STYLISH TRAVELLING SET TO SEW

IRRESISTIBLE ITALIAN PUD RECIPES

ON SALE 21 June

PHOTOS: FUTURECONTENTHUB.COM, RICHARD BUTCHER, SHUTTERSTOCK

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ROSEMARY

Wendy asks for ADVICE

Is husband Iain really seeing somebody else?

'Tell me,' said Wendy. 'Have you ever thought that Tom might, you know, be seeing somebody else?'

For the benefit of new readers, Tom is Mr Dear. Wendy is my friend from the charity shop, and we are strolling through the woods near Chateau Dear with our dogs.

I am in charge of Charlie, who is part spaniel and part bichon frisé (which still sounds to me like a French cheese). Wendy has Jack, a chocolate labrador.

Jack and Charlie are currently chasing a butterfly, and it is my solemn duty to report that the butterfly is getting the upper hand.

You are now bang up to date with the background, so let's return to the burning question of the moment. Have I ever suspected that Mr Dear might, you know, be taking a romantic interest in somebody else?

'A young woman invited him in'

'Well,' I said. 'There was that time in the late 1980s when I was sure something was going on, but...'

Luckily for the reputation of Mr Dear, the butterfly chose precisely the right moment to dodge behind a tree. Charlie saw the danger coming, but Jack – being a labrador and so unable to think of more than one thing at a time – ran straight into the trunk.

He sat down, a little dazed, and just waited for somebody to make a fuss of him. And we duly obliged. By the time we resumed the walk, Wendy had forgotten all about Mr Dear and the 1980s. It was clear that she had something rather more important on her mind.

'Why do you ask?' I wondered.

'Why do I ask what?'

'About Tom and other women?'

'Oh that,' she said, with a sigh.

'Come on,' I said. 'Out with it. That wasn't just an idle inquiry, was it?'

'No, it wasn't,' said Wendy, quietly. 'The truth is, I'm a bit worried. You see, Iain's been acting very suspiciously lately.'

Iain and Wendy live in a manor house that has been in Iain's family since the days when Henry VIII was a young man. Well, a long time, anyway. They were neighbours, and met when Iain went to complain about Wendy's fences. Or vice versa, I can't really remember.

'How do you mean, suspicious?' I asked.

'For a start, he's been making phone calls that he clearly doesn't want me to overhear. You know, he makes an excuse to hang up when I enter the room.

'And when I answer the phone, the line goes dead as soon as they realise it's me. Doesn't that sound suspicious to you?'

Apparently this happened so many times that Wendy phoned up BT to ask whether the line was faulty.

'There could be all sorts of explanations for that, Wendy,' I said, but not in a very convincing way.

'The telephone isn't the worst of it,' she said. 'A few days ago, I was driving through town and I had to take a diversion because of roadworks. As I drove past a terrace of houses – I can't remember the name of the street, but you'll probably know it. It's near the park. Rather nice Georgian properties – I saw Iain on the doorstep of one house, talking to a young woman. And she was obviously inviting him in.'

'Oh,' I said, not knowing quite what else to say.

The evidence seemed pretty damning, but I still had my doubts. It all seemed so unlike Iain, who is a four-time winner of the prestigious Man Who Looks Most Awkward In The Company Of Unfamiliar Women award.

I was with him once when a very attractive young lady asked him for directions to the bus station, and he broke out in a cold sweat.

When I mentioned all this to Wendy, she was not reassured.

'I've got a big birthday coming up,' she said. 'You know what men are like. They go off us when we're old and wrinkly.'

'But you met when you were old and wrinkly,' I said. 'Admittedly, you weren't as old and wrinkly as you are now, but you know what I mean. And what about Iain? He's old and wrinkly too. I always thought that you'd grow old and wrinkly together. Older and wrinklier, I mean.'

Oh dear, have you ever embarked on a sentence, thought better of it halfway through, and somehow been unable to wrestle it to a stop? Then you can imagine my embarrassment. Wendy, though, seemed totally unbothered.

'The thing is, Rosie – what should I do about it?'

Rosie XX

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